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PARALLELS IN SEMITIC LINGUISTICS



PARALLELS IN SEMITIC LINGUISTICS

The Development of Arabic la- and Related Semitic Particles

BY

DAVID D. TESTEN



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PREFACE

The fundamental prerequisite for diachronic linguistic analysis is the identification of a reliable and comprehensive set of sound laws by which the elements of the phonological systems of a group of related languages may be aligned with one another by means of the reconstructed sound system of the language hypothesized to be their common ancestor. In the case of the Semitic linguistic family, comparative investigation has provided us with a well-documented phonemic inventory for the proto-language, coupled with a rather simple set of formulae linking this reconstruction to the sound systems of the known languages. While the groundwork in comparative Semitic phonology has long since been laid, however, one critical area—the area of environmentally conditioned sound correspondences—remains inadequately explored.

The notion that in sound change the development of a given string of segments very frequently cannot simply be equated with the sum of the various fates of its constituent elements has long been central to historical linguistics. In the realm of comparative Semitic studies, however, the significance of this observation has not been fully appreciated. In part this is understandable. It has proved possible to produce an adequate characterization of a great deal of the phonological history of these languages without having recourse to potential complicating factors in the shape of neighboring segments or accentual environments—hence a simple statement of the sort $*X > X'$ (that is, “The reconstructed segment $*X$ of the proto-language is reflected by X' in a given descendant language”) has very often been sufficient to deal with the observed data. When deemed necessary, refinements to these simple formulae have, of course, been introduced, but the ancillary laws posited for such situations remain quite modest in number and rather “shallow” in historical depth—cf., e.g., the assimilatory properties manifested by Northwest and East Semitic reflexes of preconsontal $*n$, or the dissimilatory relations displayed by Akkadian emphatics (“Geers’ Law”).

Conditioned sound change has, however, a far vaster potential for complicating the simple picture which we have formed of Semitic phonological development than we are often inclined to acknowledge. In principle there is an enormous number of potentially relevant environments, any one of which might call for us to create a unique “micro-law” in order to achieve an adequate characterization of the language’s history. The task of delineating these laws is complicated by the fact that, since such combinations suffer on the whole from a level of occurrence far below that

of any single segment (in that the number of occasions in which the proto-language had reason to produce the co-occurrence of two segments in a sequence *XY would have been far lower than the occasions in which it was called upon to produce either *X or *Y in isolation), and the set of examples available to us when we seek to extract a given significant generalization is thus necessarily far narrower than the evidence available to us when we limit ourselves to examining phonemes in isolation. While a great deal of effort is often required in order to attain responsible and reliable results, a careful scrutiny of the finer points of phonological development will often bear fruit in the form of a more refined understanding of the many “irregularities” familiar to all students of the Semitic languages, and a keener appreciation of the subtle systematicity underlying the interaction of historical time and human communication.

The present study has been devoted to the investigation of one such issue in the history of the Semitic languages. While the question of the Arabic “emphatic” particle *la-* and its relatives might at first glance give the impression of lying at the periphery of the field’s central concerns, it proves to be of potential relevance to a wide range of grammatical questions, once we take seriously the phonological problems which it poses for comparative Semitic studies.

The first part of the study concentrates upon the Literary Arabic particle *la-*. While this element is quite familiar to anyone who has been exposed to Arabic literature, the array of puzzles which it has long posed for students of Arabic grammar leads us to suspect that the details of its original behavior and function had already largely been lost by the time of the codification of the literary language. The observations and theories of the medieval grammarians have been examined here in considerable detail, since their comments on the oddly arbitrary distribution of *la-* are found to place at our disposal a key to understanding the factors which played important roles during the course of this particle’s prehistorical development.

The methodological framework employed in Part II is the classical Neogrammarian approach long familiar to historical investigators of the Semitic languages. Armed with the insights into the Arabic particle provided by the grammarians, the investigation undertakes an examination of the comparative Semitic dimensions of this problem—specifically, the difficulties which we encounter when we confront a thought-provoking set of elements found throughout the various Semitic languages which combine strikingly comparable functions with forms which, while superficially similar, appear in their details to be irreconcilably at odds with one another. It will be suggested that this dilemma may be surmounted if we approach it as a problem in conditioned sound change, and interpret these data, their apparent complexities notwithstanding, as a set of *lautgesetzlich*

correspondences. It is proposed, moreover, that the investigation of this correspondence-set affords us the opportunity to examine anew such classic problems in comparative Semitic morphology as the rise of the definite article in West Semitic and the development of the waw-consecutive construction in Biblical Hebrew.

I would like to express my sincere thanks to Gene Gragg, Wadad Kadi, and Carolyn Killeen, who formed the committee which supervised the writing of the dissertation from which this study developed. In addition, the present work has benefited from comments provided by Howard I. Aronson, Victor Friedman, John Huehnergard, Geoffrey Khan, Erica Reiner, and two anonymous referees. To a great degree, this project reflects years of discussions with Eric P. Hamp devoted to the theory and practice of historical linguistics.

The organization of the book has benefited greatly from innumerable conversations with Nancy L. Dray, who carefully read its various drafts and provided me with her insights into the structure of argumentation in academic discourse.

Writing the dissertation and revising it into its current shape would not have been possible without the support and encouragement provided by a number of individuals and institutions. Of the numerous talented colleagues with whom it has been my pleasure to work at the University of Chicago, I am particularly grateful to Howard Aronson and Bill Darden of the Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures, John Goldsmith and Salikoko Mufwene of the Department of Linguistics, Martha Roth of the Chicago Assyrian Dictionary, and Dean Philip Gossett of the Division of the Humanities. I thank also Peri Bearman, Trudy Kamperveen, and Jan Fehrmann of E. J. Brill for their patience in dealing with what on occasions has been a complicated project. The completion of the thesis was greatly facilitated by a dissertation grant provided by the National Endowment for the Humanities (#FD-20428-93), and I am grateful to the Department of Linguistics of the University of Pennsylvania, and in particular Donald Ringe, for the opportunity to elaborate upon several of the issues associated with the present book while serving as a Mellon Fellow in the Humanities.

Chicago, March 1998

PART I

THE ARABIC PARTICLE *la-*

CHAPTER ONE

ASSEVERATIVE *la-* AND THE ARABIC GRAMMATICAL TRADITION

1.1 *Introduction*

The Arabic grammatical tradition reaches back nearly to the dawn of Islam—'Abū l-'Aswad al-Du'alī, the Baṣran scholar to whom the founding of the field is traditionally ascribed, died in A.H. 69/A.D. 688. Over the course of centuries of research and debate, Arabic grammar has developed an illustrious tradition of linguistic inquiry, the most noted expression of which is the famous *Kitāb* of Sībawayh (d. 177/793). Given the centuries of concerted energy and ingenuity which have been devoted to the study of the Arabic language, it might appear to be a matter of considerable *hybris* to suggest that anything worthy of mention may be contributed to the field at this point. Nevertheless, areas of classical Arabic grammar which might benefit from further investigation are still to be found throughout the vast corpus of early Arabic literature. One such area, the syntax and function of the emphatic particle *la-*, constitutes the focus of Part One of the present investigation.

This should not be taken to imply in any way that this particle has hitherto escaped the attention of students of Arabic grammar—on the contrary, we shall see over the course of this chapter that *la-* has received perhaps more than its fair share of discussion. However, an inspection of the classical Arabic grammarians' discussion of *la-* reveals that, while it is entirely possible to produce a succinct encapsulation of this particle stating little more than "emphatic particle" (as, we shall see, several scholars chose to do), many of the specific details surrounding the use of this particle remain less than adequately understood.

Several of the details in question serve to underscore one important factor in assessing the activities of the classical grammarians—the distance which increasingly came to intervene between the grammarians and the language which was the object of their attention. It would be a mistake, of course, to say that the Arabic of the grammarians was a "dead" language by the time of the heyday of the field of grammar. Nevertheless, it is apparent that to a considerable degree the grammarians were obliged to confront the issue of *la-* as a problem in philology, an endless series of sorties directed against an all-but-intractable array of anomalous passages culled either from the poetic legacy of the ancient Arabs or from the Qur'ān. In addressing the interpretation of these various passages, the grammarians soon found that

they were in the presence of grammatical usages that were in important respects very different from their own. Frequently, in attempting to determine the nature of *la-* the grammarians came to find the data too complex to allow for a single, unified characterization, and consequently various taxonomical models developed which posited, rather than a single *la-*, an assemblage of distinct *la*-particles operating within the grammar of early Arabic.

1.2 *The Muṣnī al-labīb of Ibn Hišām*

We find a particularly comprehensive example of the taxonomical analysis to which the grammarians subjected *la-* in the section of the *Muṣnī al-labīb* of Ibn Hišām (708-761/1310-1360) which is devoted to the letter *l* (Arabic *lām*). Under the heading ‘the non-governing *lām*’ (*al-lām ḡayr al-‘āmila*)—i.e., the *l* which assigns neither a case ending to a following noun nor a modal ending to a following verb—we find listed seven different types of *lām*. Two of these, the *lām* of the definite article *al-* and the *lām* found in the demonstratives *ḡālika* ‘that (m. sg.)’ and *tilka* ‘that (f. sg.)’, are unrelated to the issue presently at hand and may be set aside.¹ The remaining five *lāmāt* are identified by the following names:

1. The *lām* of the commencement (*lām al-ibtidā’*)
2. The supplementary *lām* (*al-lām al-zā’ida*)
3. The *lām* of the apodosis (*lām al-jawāb*)
4. The announcing *lām* (*al-lām al-mu’ḡina*) or the *lām* which paves the way (*al-lām al-muwaṭṭi’a*)
5. The *lām* of amazement which does not govern the genitive (*lām al-ta’ajjub ḡayr al-jārra*)

Several of these, as we shall see in the discussion below, contain subcategories. All five have in common the fact that they are pronounced with the vowel *a* (that is, they are read as *la-* rather than **lu-*, **li-*, or vowelless **l-*), and the fact that they do not assign a case or mood ending to a following word. These five *lāmāt* thus stand in contrast, for example, to the preposition *li-*, which was associated with a different vocalic pattern (*li-* with a following noun, *la-* with a suffixed pronoun) and had clearly defined inflectional ramifications (a following noun taking the genitive case—*li-zaydin* ‘to Zayd’).

¹ See Chapter Four below for discussion of the Arabic definite article and related matters.

1.2.1 ‘The *lām* of the commencement’ (*lām al-ibtidā’*)

Traditional Arabic syntax classifies all sentences as either verbal sentences (*jumal fi‘liyya*)—i.e., those beginning with a finite verb—or nominal sentences (*jumal ismiyya*)—i.e., those beginning with a substantive. The ‘*lām* of the commencement’ (*lām al-ibtidā’*)—a phenomenon largely if not exclusively associated with the latter type—is a *la-* which is prefixed to the initial element of the sentence. Under typical circumstances, this initial element is (by virtue of the definition of a nominal sentence) a substantive. The percentage of instances of this type of *lām* actually found in the initial position, however, is smaller than might be anticipated, since the occurrence of *la-* is very frequently associated with that of the particle ‘*inna-*’, the appearance of which, in the view of the grammarians, leads to the ejection of *la-* from its proper clause-initial position.

The structure of a sentence of the nominal type consists of a noun phrase acting as topic (*al-mubtada’ bihi* ‘commenced-by,’ or simply *al-mubtada’*) and, as comment, the *xabar* (‘report’); the latter may take the form of a verbal clause, a second substantive phrase, or a prepositional phrase. For nominal sentences having a verbal clause as *xabar*, the *mubtada’* is coreferential with a pronoun within the *xabar*; this pronoun may be either unexpressed (if the topic is coreferential with the subject of the verb of the *xabar*) or overtly expressed by a resumptive pronoun. In the latter case, the sentence is known as a *jumla δāt wajhayni*, a ‘two-faced sentence.’ Consider the following nominal sentences: *zaydun muslimun* ‘Zayd (is) a Muslim,’ *zaydun fī l-dāri* ‘Zayd (is) in the house,’ *zaydun ḡaraba ‘amran* ‘Zayd beat ‘Amr,’ and *zaydun ḡaraba ‘amrun ‘axā-hu* ‘Zayd—‘Amr beat his brother.’

| Type of <i>xabar</i> | <i>mubtada’ bihi</i> | <i>xabar</i> | |
|--|---------------------------------|---|---|
| Substantive: | <i>zaydun</i> Zayd (nom.sg.) | <i>muslimun</i> Muslim (nom.sg.) | ‘Zayd (is) a Muslim.’ |
| Prepositional phrase: | <i>zaydun</i> Zayd (nom.sg.) | <i>fī l-dāri</i> in the-house | ‘Zayd (is) in the house.’ |
| Verbal clause: <i>mubtada’</i> = Subject | <i>zaydun</i> Zayd (nom.sg.) | <i>ḡaraba</i> (Ø) ₁ ‘ <i>amran</i> beat (3sg.) (Ø) ‘Amr (acc.sg.) | ‘Zayd ₁ —beat (he ₁) ‘Amr [Zayd beat ‘Amr’] |
| Verbal clause: <i>mubtada’</i> ≠ Subject | <i>zaydun</i> Zayd (nom.sg.) | <i>ḡaraba</i> ‘ <i>amrun</i> ‘ <i>axā-hu</i> ₁ beat (3sg.) ‘Amr (nom.sg.) brother (acc.sg.) -his | ‘Zayd ₁ —beat ‘Amr his ₁ brother’ [‘Zayd’s brother was beaten by ‘Amr’] |

Table 1: Structure of the *jumla ismiyya*

In certain circumstances (most typically in the case of questions, or of sentences formed from an indefinite *mubtada'* *bihi* and a prepositional phrase acting as *xabar*) the order of these two main sentential components may be reversed so that the *xabar* precedes the *mubtada'* *bihi*. In this case the *mubtada'* *bihi* is said to be 'delayed' (*muta'axxir*) and the *xabar* 'fronted' (*mutaqaddim*); cf. '*a-qā'imun zaydun* 'Is Zayd standing?' and *fī l-dāri rajulun* 'In the house (there is) a man.'

According to Ibn Hišām, the *lām al-ibtidā'* serves two purposes: (1) the emphasizing of the content of the sentence (*tawkīd maḍmūn al-jumla*), and (2) the restriction of the prefixed-tense verb to the present (*taxliṣ l-muḍāri' li-l-ḥāl*). The latter feature is significant in light of the fact that the prefixed-tense form of the verb (*al-muḍāri'*) is otherwise merely 'non-past' in meaning and may be employed to refer to either the present or the future. Consequently, while a verbal form such as *yaf'alu* in isolation may refer to either the present or the future ('he does/is doing/will do'), only the present-tense reading is allowable in conjunction with *lām al-ibtidā'* ('*inna zaydan la-yaf'alu...* = 'Verily Zayd *la-* does/is doing/*will do') (Ibn Hišām 251).

It may be noted that Ibn Hišām's second point is not universally held among the grammarians. The Qur'ānic passage XVI: 125/124 '*inna rabbaka la-yahkumu baynahum yawma l-qiyāmati* 'Verily, thy Lord judges between them on the Day of Judgment,' which incontrovertibly refers to the future, was felt to be particularly damaging to claims that the present-form verb was restricted to the present tense in the environment of *lām al-ibtidā'*. As al-Sīrāfi states in his commentary on Sibawayh's *Kitāb*:²

And when someone says, "When you say '*inna zaydan la-yaqūmu* 'Verily Zayd *la-* rises,' is the verb in one of the two ambiguous tenses [i.e., either present or future] or is it in the present?" the answer to this is that our companions are of two opinions on this question. Some of them say that the *lām* limits the prefixed verb in the *xabar* of '*inna* to the present. Another faction says that the *lām* does not limit the prefixed verb to the present, and they find it acceptable to say '*inna 'abda-llāhi la-sawfa yaqūmu* 'Verily, 'Abdu-llāhi *la-* will rise' [with the future particle *sawfa*], substantiating the correctness [of their claim] by His saying (He is powerful and exalted!) *wa-'inna rabbaka la-yahkumu baynahum yawma l-qiyāmati*. They say, "If the *lām* limited the verb to the present, it would not be acceptable for Him to say *la-yahkumu baynahum yawma l-qiyāmati*, just as, since the particles *sīn* and *sawfa* limit prefixed verbs to the future, it is not acceptable to say [*]'*inna zaydan sawfa yaqūmu l-'āna*

² Unless noted otherwise, the excerpts from the works of the grammarians have been translated by the author.

‘*Verily, Zayd will rise at this moment’.” And if someone says, “Then you claim that when we say *zaydun qā’imun* ‘Zayd (is) standing’ [with a predicate participle] it is most likely in this utterance that he refers to the present, but despite this it is acceptable to say *zaydun qā’imun yadan* ‘Zayd (is) standing tomorrow’.” The *lām*, according to what this person is claiming, occurs with the prefixed verb, which serves for two tenses, and limits it to one of them, just as *sīn* and *sawfa* occur with it and limit it to the other tense. But we say that were the *lām* to limit the verb to one of the tenses it would not be acceptable to use it with the other tense. But you can say ‘*inna zaydan la-yaqūmu yadan* ‘Verily Zayd *la*-rises tomorrow,’ whereas you cannot say [*]‘*inna zaydan sawfa yaqūmu l-’āna* ‘*Verily Zayd will rise at this moment.’ This second view is more correct in my opinion: when we say ‘*inna zaydan la-yaf’alu*, it serves both for when you intend the present and when you intend the future, and when we mean the present it is like when we say ‘*inna zaydan la-fā’ilun il’āna* ‘Verily Zayd *la*-(is) standing [participle] now’ and when we mean the future it is like when we say ‘*inna zaydan la-fā’ilun ba’dū* ‘Verily Zayd *la*-[is] standing [participle] afterwards.’ It is acceptable for the active participle *fā’ilun* to occur in the place of the verb *yaf’alu*, although in one of the tenses [the future] you need an additional word [i.e., a temporal adverb such as *ba’dū*] for clarification.³ [Sībawaihi/Jahn I/2: 9-10]

In simple nominal sentences containing *la-*, the particle will be found prefixed to the first element of the sentence. In most cases (such as, for example, the Qur’ānic verse *la-’antum ’ašaddu rahbatan fī šudūrihim min allāhi*, XIII: 59), this is the *mubtada’ bihi*.

| <i>la-</i> | mubtada’ | xabar | | | |
|------------|---------------------------------|--|------------------------------------|--|--|
| | <i>’antum</i> you (m.pl.) | <i>’ašaddu</i> more-intense (nom.) | <i>rahbatan</i> dread (acc.) | <i>fī šudūri-him</i> in chests (gen.)- their (m.pl.) | <i>min-a llāhi</i> from God (gen.) |

‘*la*-You (are) a greater source of dread to them than God is.’

In those nominal sentences in which the order of the *mubtada’* and the *xabar* is reversed for one reason or another, the particle *la-* is attached to the fronted *xabar*. Ibn Hišām cites the example *la-qā’imun zaydun* ‘*la*-Standing (is) Zayd.’

Cases of *lām al-ibtidā’* being located within sentences may result from the appearance of the particle in embedded clauses. When these lower

³ Ibn Hišām defends this claim against objections raised by Ibn Mālik on the basis of examples such as ‘*inna rabbaka la-yahkumu baynahum yawma l-qiyāmati* ‘Verily, thy Lord judges between them on the Day of Judgment’ and ‘*innī la-yahzununī ’an taṣhabū bihi* (Q XII: 13) ‘Verily, it will sadden me that you take him away.’ He argues that in each case the reference is actually to a present state: in the first case, he says that the perspective is that of one present at the Judgment, while, in the second, the effect of the saddening is in the present even though the act of taking away lies in the future (Ibn Hišām 251).

clauses are asyndetic, the *la-* serves to block any case assignment properties the verb of the higher clause might otherwise exercise. The particle is thus said not only to have no inflectional properties itself but to hinder the inflectional effects of other elements. When, for example, the higher clause contains a verb of knowledge or perception (*fi'l al-qalb*), which would normally place both the *mubtada'* and the *xabar* of the object-clause in the accusative ('*alimtu zaydan munṭaliqan* 'I know (that) Zayd [acc.] (is) leaving [acc.]'), the presence of a *la-* leads to both noun phrases appearing in the nominative ('*alimtu la-zaydun munṭaliqun* 'I know *la-*(that) Zayd [nom.] (is) leaving [nom.]').

The presence of *la-* is also said to have hindering effects in conjunction with fronted, topicalized noun phrases. The nominative case of the name 'Zayd' in the sentence *zaydun la-'anā 'ukrimu-hu* 'Zayd (nom.), *la-I* (independent pron.) honor-him' (said to result by fronting from **la-'anā 'ukrimu zaydan*) is thus ascribed to the *la-* blocking the governing effect of the verb; in sentences such as *la-zaydun qā'imun* '*la-Zayd* (is) standing' and *la-qā'imun zaydun* '*la-Standing* (is) Zayd,' the *la-* makes application of the fronting impossible altogether (**qā'imun la-zaydun*, **zaydun la-qā'imun*). Problematical verses from the ancient poetry such as '*ummu l-ḥulaysi la-'ajūzun šahrabah* 'Umm al-Ḥulays *la-*(is) an old woman, a *šahraba*,' which ought to have been as impossible as **zaydun la-qā'imun*, attracted various interpretations from the grammarians. Some took the verse to involve a *lām zā'ida*—see (§1.2.8.) below—rather than *lām al-ibtidā'*; others assumed the presence of an elided *hiya* 'she' as pronominal *mubtada'*, the verse being at the deeper level **ummu l-ḥulaysi la-hiya 'ajūzun šahrabah*, and thus comparable to *zaydun la-'anā 'ukrimu-hu*.

There is disagreement among the grammarians as to the possibility of *lām al-ibtidā'* appearing outside of the nominal type of sentence. Grammarians such as Ibn al-Ḥājj, Ibn al-Xabbāz, and al-Zamaxšarī state categorically that it is impossible for *lām al-ibtidā'* to be found at the head of a sentence beginning with a verb. On those occasions in which a *la-* is found prefixed to an initial verb, these grammarians assume that either (a) the syntactic structure of the sentence is different on the deeper level, the verb only giving the appearance of being in the initial position, or (b) the *la-* in question is not actually *lām al-ibtidā'* but some other type of *lām* particle, for which the term *lām al-tawkīd* (the '*lām* of emphasis') is frequently found. Other grammarians allow that *lām al-ibtidā'* is in fact capable of appearing before an initial verb, but qualify this claim by adding that any verb which takes such a *lām* must be of a particular class (i.e., the defective verbs such as '*asā* 'it is perhaps..., ' *bi'sa* 'he is bad,' etc., which lack a present tense paradigm) or be marked with the aspectual particle *qad*. Ibn Hišām himself is an adherent of the school permitting *lām al-ibtidā'*

before verbs, although he grants that the generally accepted view (*al-mašhūr*) is that the *la-* in such cases is the ‘*lām* of the oath’ (*lām al-qasam*—v. infra) rather than the *lām* of the commencement.

Ibn Hišām presents the arguments of two grammarians of the “hard line” school of *lām al-ibtidā’*, al-Zamaxšarī and Ibn al-Ḥāḡib, who hold differing views on the following Qur’ānic passages. According to the reading of al-Zamaxšarī, we must assume an underlying substantive after each *la-*, making these verses, at the abstract level, canonical instances of *lām al-ibtidā’*. Ibn al-Ḥāḡib, in contrast, rejects al-Zamaxšarī’s invisible *mubtada’*, preferring to take the particle *la-* to be a homophonous particle entirely distinct from the *lām al-ibtidā’*.

| | | | |
|--|--------------|--------------------------|------------------|
| <i>wa- la-</i> | <i>sawfa</i> | <i>yu’ṭī-ka</i> | <i>rabbu-ka</i> |
| and <i>la-</i> | FUTURE | provide for (3m.sg.)-you | Lord (nom.)-your |
| ‘And <i>la</i> -your Lord will provide for you....’(XCIV/XCIII: 5) | | | |

| | | | |
|--|----------------|-----------------|-------------------------|
| <i>la-</i> | <i>’uqsimu</i> | <i>bi-yawmi</i> | <i>l-qiyaṃati</i> |
| <i>la-</i> | swear (1 sg.) | by-day of | the-Resurrection (gen.) |
| ‘ <i>la</i> -(I) swear by the Day of Resurrection’ (LXXV: 1-2) | | | |

In the first passage, the *la-* precedes a clause-initial finite verb marked with the future-tense particle *sawfa*; in the second, *la-* precedes a clause-initial present-tense verb. (It should be noted that both of these structures, *la-* + *sawfa* and *la-* + present, are extremely rare in sentence-initial position: the Qur’ānic passages cited here may well be the only good examples.) Interpreting these verses as cases of the *lām al-ibtidā’* obliges al-Zamaxšarī to assume the presence of an underlying noun phrase between the particle and the following verb (**wa-la-’anta* (‘you’ m.sg.) *sawfa yu’ṭīka rabbuka*, **la-’anā* (‘I’) *’uqsimu*).

... [Al-Zamaxšarī] says in the interpretation of *wa-la-sawfa yu’ṭīka rabbuka*, “The *lām al-ibtidā’* does not occur with anything but the *mubtada’* and the *xabar*.” He says concerning *la-’uqsimu*, “This is a *lām al-ibtidā’* occurring with an elided *mubtada’*—one cannot assume that there is a ‘*lām* of the oath’ here, because this would require the verb to be in the energetic form.” He maintains the same thing for *wa-la-sawfa yu’ṭīka rabbuka*, that the *mubtada’* is understood, i.e. [*]*wa-la-’anta sawfa yu’ṭīka rabbuka*. [Ibn Hišām 253]

Ibn Hišām quotes Ibn al-Ḥāḡib using almost the same words that al-Zamaxšarī uses (“The *lām al-ibtidā’* requires the *mubtada’*”), but the conclusion which Ibn al-Ḥāḡib draws from this is entirely different: since there is no *mubtada’*, this cannot possibly be *lām al-ibtidā’*. Dismissing the notion that the particles in these passages are *lām al-ibtidā’*, Ibn al-Ḥāḡib takes the “hidden *mubtada’*” argument to task, pointing out that both the underlying sentential structure which such an interpretation implies and

the elisions which it makes necessary are not borne out by parallels elsewhere in the grammar.

And Ibn al-Hājib says: “The *lām* in this is the *lām al-tawkīd* (the ‘*lām* of emphasis’). As for the view of some that it is *lām al-ibtidā’* and that the *mubtada’* is understood, this view is unsound in various respects. The first is that *lām* with the *ibtidā’* is like [the aspect particle] *qad* with the verb, or ‘*inna* with its noun—just as the verb or the noun cannot be elided with [*qad* or ‘*inna*] remaining after they are gone, so it is impossible for the *lām* [to remain] after the elision of the noun. The second is that, if a *mubtada’* is assumed for a sentence such as *la-sawfa yaqūmu zaydun* ‘*la*-Zayd will rise,’ one must assume an original **la-zaydun sawfa yaqūmu zaydun*, and there is no mistaking the unacceptability of this. The third is that one is obliged to assume an elision [of the *mubtada’*] of which the language has no need....” [Ibn Hišām 253]

Ibn Hišām responds to the interpretations of both al-Zamaxšarī and Ibn al-Hājib by pointing out that, in the first place, there are places in which it is generally acknowledged that a *lām al-ibtidā’* is found prefixed to something other than the *mubtada’*, namely, in sentences such as *la-qā’imun zaydun* ‘*la*-Standing (is) Zayd,’ in which the *xabar* has been fronted. On the other hand, Ibn al-Hājib’s objections to al-Zamaxšarī’s underlying *mubtada’* do not stand, Ibn Hišām argues, since it is well known that there are in fact situations in which the initial noun phrase of a nominal sentence is elided—Ibn Hišām adduces the assumed subject of the second clause in *qumtu wa-’asukku ‘ayna-hu* ‘I rose, striking his eye,’ and the assumed *mubtada’* after the conjunction *fa-* in *wa-man ‘āda fa-yantaqimu llāhu min-hu* ‘And whoever goes back, (*fa-*) God will take revenge on him’ (Q V: 96/98). Likewise, Ibn Hišām observes that the deletion of the *mubtada’* is not as entirely without support as Ibn al-Hājib would have it, since the problematical Qur’ānic passage ‘*in(na) hāḍāni la-sāḥirāni* (Q II: 66/63) ‘Verily, these two *la*-(are) magicians,’ which many scholars read as underlyingly *‘*inna hāḍāni la-humā sāḥirāni* with an assumed dual pronoun *humā* as *mubtada’*, provides an apparent parallel to the elision which al-Zamaxšarī proposes. The part of al-Zamaxšarī’s analysis which Ibn Hišām finds unacceptable is that we are obliged to find in *la-sawfa yu’ṭika rabbuka* the co-occurrence of one particle (*sawfa*) which serves specifically to mark the future tense and another particle (*lām al-ibtidā’*) which specifically marks the present tense. As we have seen, Ibn Hišām describes the “restriction of the prefixed-tense verb to the present” as one of the two primary functions of the *lām al-ibtidā’*.

1.2.2 ‘The *lām* of ‘*inna*,’ or ‘the *lām* which ‘slides down’’ (*lām* ‘*inna*, *al-lām al-muzaḥliqa*)

As we have seen, under normal circumstances, the *lām al-ibtidā’* is found at the onset of the clause—leaving aside a very limited number of possible counterexamples such as ‘*ummu l-ḥulaysi la-‘ajūzun šahraba*’ ‘‘Umm al-Hulays *la-*(is) an old woman, a *šahraba*’ mentioned above, which, as we have seen, are open to alternate analyses. In one important environment, however, we routinely find *lām al-ibtidā’* outside this position. A class of nominal sentences of particular importance in discussing the issue of *la-* is the type characterized by the prefixation of the particle ‘*inna*, an element which, like *la-*, is said to underscore the veracity of the utterance in which it is found. In the environment of ‘*inna*, *la-* does not appear at the beginning of the sentence but rather is displaced to a position within it, at the beginning of the *xabar* or, on occasions, within the *xabar*. Known to the grammarians as *al-lām al-muzaḥliqa* or *al-lām al-muzaḥlaqa* (literally, ‘the *l* which has slid (or ‘been slid’) down,’ the image employed being that of children sliding down the slope of a sand dune—see Ibn Mañḍūr, s.v.), it is said to have been shifted from its original location to the position in which it is found. The underlying position of *la-* in such sentences is taken to have been the point before ‘*inna*, a sentence of the type ‘*inna zaydan la-qā’imun* ‘Verily Zayd *la-*(is) standing’ consequently being regarded as a transposed equivalent of an original **la-‘inna zaydan qā’imun*. The *lām al-muzaḥliqa*, although located in the interior of the sentence at the surface level, is therefore still interpreted (by a number of the grammarians, at least) as *lām al-ibtidā’*, the *l* of the commencement.

As for the necessity of the *lām* [appearing] in the *xabar* rather than in the *ism*, its original shape, before one said ‘*inna zaydan la-qā’imun*, was [*]*la-‘inna zaydan qā’imun*, but they were repelled by the coming into contact of two emphasizing particles, and they made ‘*inna* be at the commencement and the *lām* in the *xabar*, so that the utterance might be proper and symmetrical.

And if someone asks, “Why was not the *lām* placed in the *ism* and ‘*inna* in the *xabar*?” we say, “That would be unacceptable for two reasons: first, that ‘*inna* is a governor, and, if ‘*inna* were placed in the *xabar*, it would be necessary for its *ism* to precede, even though it is in the accusative [i.e., **la-zaydan* (acc.) ‘*inna qā’imun* (nom.)], and this would be unacceptable on account of its ungrammaticality and its violation of the rules of inflection. The other [reason that *la-* rather than ‘*inna* is shifted] is that, if what adjoined [‘*inna*] were put into the accusative while what preceded it was in the nominative [i.e., **la-zaydun* (nom.) ‘*inna qā’iman* (acc.)], the element to which ‘*inna* assigns the nominative would have preceded [‘*inna* itself] and would have been made indefinite, while its *xabar* would have to be definite [i.e., **la-zaydun* (indef.) ‘*inna l-*

qā'ima (def.)). But all this is unacceptable, and so *'inna* is placed with the *ism* so as to put [the latter] in the accusative and so as not to have its governing effect nullified, and the *lām* is placed in the *xabar* because it is the place in which one finds whatever is not affected [i.e., assigned an inflection] by *'inna*, such as the past-tense verb and the future-tense verb and prepositions and clauses. [al-Zajjājī 64-5]

It might in theory be argued that, even if the syntax of *'inna... la...* sentences is the result of two emphatic particles in contact at an abstract level, the underlying order could just as easily be **'inna-la...* rather than **la-'inna...* Ibn Hišām cites arguments used by the grammarians to counter such a claim. One such argument is based upon the behavior of such sentences when preceded by verbs of knowledge or perception (*'af'āl al-qalb*, the 'verbs of the heart'). In contrast to instances of such clauses which lack *la-*, the particle spelled <'n> is read as *'inna* rather than *'anna* when *la-* is present—thus, *'alimtu 'inna zaydan la-qā'imun* 'I know that [= *'inna*] Zayd *la*-(is) standing' vs. *'alimtu 'anna zaydan qā'imun* 'I know that [= *'anna*] Zayd (is) standing.' The distinction between the two forms of the conjunctions is said to be due to the underlying presence of *lām* in the former type.

... The indicator of the first [argument] is that [*la-*] prevents the verb of knowledge or perception from affecting <'n> and its two objects, and therefore [<'n>] is read with the vowel *i*, in the manner of *wa-llāhu ya'lamu 'innaka la-rasūluhu* [LXIII: 1] 'And God knows that [*'inna*] you *la*-(are) His apostle.' Indeed, this hindering even comes about when [the *lām*] is deleted in the saying of the Huḍalī poet:

| | |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| <i>fa-yābartu ba'dahumū bi-'ayšin</i> | <i>wa-'ixālu 'innī lāhiqun</i> |
| <i>nāšibin</i> | <i>mustatba'u</i> |
| I remained after them [the poet's | And I believe that [<i>'inna</i>] I am |
| five sons] in a wearisome life | fastened [to them] and |
| | compelled to follow |

The base is [**'innī la-lāhiqun*], but the *lām* was deleted after having followed *'ixālu*. The vowel *i* remained after the deletion of [the *lām*] as it does when the *lām* is present, for it is one of those things which may be unpronounced and yet whose effect remains. The indicator of the second [argument for the underlying presence of the *lām* before the *'inna*] is that the accusative case caused by the presence of *'inna* is found beyond it: you say *'inna fī l-dāri la-zaydan* '*inna* in the house *la*-(is) Zayd (acc.)' and *'inna zaydan la-qā'imun* '*inna* Zayd (acc.) *la*-(is) standing' [i.e., the accusative case assigned by *'inna* is not blocked as it presumably would have been if the clause were underlyingly **'inna-la-zaydan*; see above for the government-hindering effects of *la-*]. Similarly, the effects of a case-assigning element found following the *lām* may be seen before it, as in *'inna zaydan ṭa'āmaka la-'ākilun* '*inna* Zayd your-food (accusative) *la*-(is) eating' [vs. *zaydan la-'anā 'ukrimu-hu* above]. Badr al-Dīn b. al-Mālik is incorrect in rejecting this construction, for it frequently occurs in the Revelation, as in *'inna rabbahum bihim yawma'idīn la-xabīrun* '*inna* their

Lord about them on that day *la-*(is) well informed' [Q C: 11]. [Ibn Hišām 255]

There is yet another reason for the grammarians' assumption that **la-'inna...* underlies the construction '*inna... la...*', viz. the occasional presence of a particle *lahinna-* in older poetry. This form is comparable in function to '*inna... la...*', and, although it is rare and presumably dialectal, it served for many grammarians (among them Sībawayh) as evidence supporting the derivation of '*inna... la...*' from **la-'inna...*. The details of the arguments used by the individual grammarians to analyze *lahinna-* differ considerably, and several respected authorities deny any connection whatsoever between this form and '*inna... la...*'. Compare the discussion in al-Suyūṭī, cited by Fischer:

And it is said that the glottal stop of '*inna*' is replaced by *h*, together with the emphasis of the *xabar* or without it, as in *lahinnaki min 'absiyyatin la-wasīmatun* [trans. Fischer: 'Bei Gott, du bist—eine 'Absitin, wie du bist—schön (trotz allerlei Sachen, die Lügner von dir aussagen)'] and *lahinnaka min barqin 'alayya karīmu* [Fischer: '(O Blitzesleuchten auf den Höhen des Stammesbezirkes (der Geliebten)), bei Gott, du bist mir, als Blitz, teuer']. This is what Ibn Jinnī and Ibn Mālik have chosen [as their interpretation], that there is a *lām al-ibtidā'* in this word; the appearance of [the *lām*] in conjunction with '*inna*' is acceptable by virtue of the latter's change in pronunciation through the replacement [of glottal stop by *h*].... But Sībawayh and Ibn al-Sarrāj conclude that it is the *lām* of an understood oath, not the *lām* of '*inna*'. Sībawayh says, "And this is a word used by the Arabs when swearing an oath." Quṭrub and al-Farrā' and al-Mufaḍḍal b. Salama and al-Fārisī conclude (and Ibn 'Uṣfūr approves of this) that the origin is *lahi 'innaka*—that is, with two words—and the meaning of *lahi* is *wallāhi* 'By God!' and '*inna*' is the apodosis of the oath. *Lahi rabbī lā 'aqūlu* ['*lahi* my Lord! I will not say!'] has been heard, [the speaker] meaning *wallāhi rabbī*; the glottal stop has been elided by virtue of having been lightened, as it has been elided in sentences like '*innahā lahdā l-kubar*' [LXXIV: 37/35 'Verily it is the greatest one' for the expected *'*innahā l-'ihdā l-kubar*']. But Abū Ḥayyān rejects the first two interpretations [i.e., those comparing *lahinna-* to **la-'inna-*] for assuming the conjunction of two particles serving for the purpose of emphasis, and the third interpretation because it contains four separate violations of the grammatical rules [to explain the development of the form *lahi* from *wallāhi*]... [al-Suyūṭī, *Ham' al-hawāmi'*, I, 131, 3 ff., as cited by Fischer 1948: 50]

Whether or not *lahinna-* is to be related to '*inna... la...*', the latter structure is taken by Ibn Hišām to result from the displacement of *la-* in **la-'inna...*. It is interesting to note, however, that for Ibn Hišām not all instances of the sequence '*inna... la...*' contain a *lām al-ibtidā'*. He observes that there is general agreement among scholars that a *lām al-ibtidā'* is to be found in

'inna-sentences containing a *xabar* which consists of either (1) a noun phrase, (2) a present-tense verb, or (3) a prepositional phrase.

- (1) *'inna rabbī la-samī'u l-du'ā'i* (XIV: 39)
'Verily, my Lord *la*-(is) the hearer of the call.'
- (2) *'inna rabbaka la-yahkumu baynahum* (XVI: 124)
'Verily, your Lord *la*-judges between them'
- (3) *'inna-ka la-'alā xalqin 'aḏīmin* (LXVIII: 4)
'Verily, you *la*-(are) on a great creation'

In contrast, in 'inna-sentences containing three other types of *xabar* the analysis of the *la*- is open to debate.

... One of them is the defective past verb (*al-mādī l-jāmid*) [which lacks a non-past conjugation] such as *'inna zaydan la-'asā 'an yaqūma* 'Verily Zayd *la*-it is possible (*'asā*) that he will rise' or [*'inna zaydan*] *la-ni'ma l-raḡulu* '[Verily Zayd] *la*-what a man!'—'Abū al-Ḥasan maintains this, his idea being that the defective verb is similar to a substantive, but the opinion of the majority is against him.⁴ The second is the past-tense verb provided with [the perfect particle] *qad*—the majority hold this, the idea being that *qad* brings the past tense closer to the present, thus making it like a present-tense verb which in turn resembles a substantive. Xaṭṭāb and Muḥammad b. Mas'ūd al-Ghaznī disagree, however, claiming, "When one says, *'inna zaydan la-qad qāma* 'Verily Zayd *la*-has risen,' this is the apodosis of an understood oath" [and the *lām* is therefore *lām jawāb al-qasam*—v. infra]. And the third is the non-defective past-tense verb lacking *qad*—al-Kisā'ī and Hišām maintain that this is correct on the assumption that *qad* has been elided, but the majority reject this view. They say, "This is only the *lām* of the oath; when you place a verb of perception or knowledge in front you read the <'n> as *'anna* [rather than *'inna*], like *'alimtu 'anna zaydan la-qāma* 'I know that [= *'anna*] Zayd *la*-rose.'" But in their opinion [i.e., that of al-Kisā'ī and Hišām] the vowel *i* [*'inna*] is the correct reading. [Ibn Hišām 252]

While at first glance it may appear jejune, the question of the vowel in the particle(s) *'inna/anna* is significant. The point of the grammarians' debate in this case is not a matter of conflicting analyses but of disagreement as to the empirical facts. The uncertainty as to whether a given sentence was to be read as *'alimtu 'inna zaydan la-qāma* or as *'alimtu 'anna zaydan la-qāma* underscores the fact that the classical grammarians were operating at some remove from the language that was the object of their research, and that by the time of the heyday of the discipline the grammarians were not making statements about the facts of Arabic on the basis of their intuitions as speakers of the language. Consequently, in at least certain areas, the

⁴ It is not clear from the text whether Ibn Hišām means that the majority opinion objects to this analysis or to the existence of such sentences.

grammarians were going beyond the mere collecting and collating of the received grammatical tradition and attempting, by means of philological research (primarily into classical poetry, the Qur'ān and its readings, and the Traditions), fieldwork among Bedouins (*al-'arab* or *al-'a'rāb* 'the Arabs,' who were felt by many grammarians to have preserved a more pristine form of the language), and, finally, logical deduction based upon their grammatical theories, to determine what the facts of Arabic grammar actually were, filling in the lacunae and reconciling the discrepancies in the data at their disposal.

An example of the problems involved in such research may be seen in the debate over whether or not 'inna-sentences with a *xabar* containing the future particle *sawfa* are acceptable. As we have seen, al-Sīrāfi mentions that certain grammarians regard the construction 'inna 'abda-llāhi *la-sawfa yaqūmu* 'Verily, 'Abd-allāh *la*-will rise' as permissible, basing their claim upon the observation that the Qur'ānic verse 'inna rabbaka *la-yaḥkumu baynahum yawma l-qiyāmati* is evidence that the *xabar* of 'inna may refer to the future. Al-Zamaxšarī states, "In our opinion, 'inna *zaydan la-sawfa yaqūmu* is acceptable, although the Kūfans do not regard it as acceptable," and Ibn al-Ḥāḡib likewise relates the varying assessments of the allowability of this structure to the different grammatical schools.

... This is only acceptable in the opinion of the Baṣrans. For the *lām* in their view is not [specifically] for the present, but is only a *lām al-ibtidā'* which has been shifted back, in accordance with what we have mentioned. So it is permissible for that which has the meaning of the present to come together with the future since there is no contradiction between them. But in the view of the Kūfans it is [solely] for the present, and when it comes together with *sawfa* the meaning is in conflict, since it becomes present by the *lām* but future by *sawfa*, and this is a contradiction... [Ibn al-Ḥāḡib/El-Aleeli II: 273-274]

The issue of 'inna vs. 'anna is another case in point. Since the distinction between the two forms is not one which would normally have been represented graphically in the texts upon which the grammarians worked, it must have been difficult for them to determine what principles, if any, were to be found in the classical texts governing the distribution of these forms. Grammatical researchers, however, noting that the 'innal'anna issue was intertwined with the issue of the particle *la-*, began to employ the taxonomical models which they were developing for the latter as a determining factor in supplementing the inconclusive evidence available on the former.

'inna *zaydan la-qāma* 'Verily Zayd *la*-rose [past-tense verb]' or ['inna *zaydan la-yaqūmanna* '[Verily Zayd] *la*-will rise [energic-future verb]': the *lām* is the *lām* of the apodosis of an understood oath [i.e., e.g., **wallāhi* 'inna *zaydan la-qāma/la-yaqūmanna* 'By God!...'], not *lām al-ibtidā'*. For

when you precede it with *'alimtu* 'I know,' for example, you give the glottal stop the vowel *a*. But if you say ... *la-qad qāma zaydun* '... *la*-has risen [perfect verb] Zayd,' they have claimed, "This is *lām al-ibtidā'*, and thus the vowel *i* [*'inna*] is required for the glottal stop." In my opinion both of these views are possible (*wa-'andī 'anna l-'amrayni muḥtamalāni*). [Ibn Hišām 255]

It is clear from a synthesis of these various grammatical facts that Ibn Hišām's views on the grammaticality of these various formations are distinctly reminiscent of his general views on *lām al-ibtidā'*. If we consider the various structures in question and his judgments on the degree of their acceptability, we find that a rather clear pattern emerges.

| Lower clause | Parsing | |
|--------------|---|---|
| PRESENT: | <i>'alimtu 'inna zaydan la-yaqūmu</i> = <i>Lām al-ibtidā'</i> | |
| PERFECT: | <i>'alimtu 'inna zaydan la-qad qāma</i> = <i>Lām al-ibtidā'</i> | |
| PAST: | <i>'alimtu 'inna zaydan la-qāma</i> = <i>Lām al-ibtidā'</i> with elision of <i>qad</i> (al-Kisā'i, Hišām) | <i>'alimtu 'anna zaydan la-qāma</i> = <i>Lām</i> of [the apodosis of] the oath (Ibn Hišām et al.) |
| ENERGIC: | <i>'alimtu 'anna zaydan la-yaqūmanna</i> = <i>Lām</i> of the apodosis of the oath | |

Table 2: Medial *la-* in the subordinate clause (after Ibn Hišām)

It is interesting to note that, while Ibn Hišām differs with al-Kisā'i and Hišām in his understanding of the nature of the empirical data, he shares with them the principles to be used for the data's interpretation: since the particle takes the form *'inna* with the past tense in their reading (*'alimtu 'inna zaydan la-qāma*), the *la-* must therefore be *lām al-ibtidā'*, the reasoning being the same as that employed by Ibn Hišām for *'alimtu 'inna zaydan la-yaqūmu*, etc. Like the others, Ibn Hišām appears to have found the notion of a *xabar* consisting of *la-* and a past-tense verb unpalatable in itself, but he sought to resolve the strangeness of the construction by interpreting the *lām* as *lām jawāb al-qasam*, rather than by positing an underlying *qad* as they did. The disagreement between the two views at the empirical level is matched by consensus at the theoretical level, which indicates that the discrepancies in the data confronting these grammarians were real and not (exclusively, at least) the products of their own reasoning.

It is worth noting, incidentally, that in the discussion of the *la-* + past tense construction the participants in the debate rely upon examples produced *ad hoc* (i.e., of the "Zayd struck 'Amr" type) rather than adducing examples from the Qur'ān or classical poetry. It is also noteworthy that the older grammar of Sībawayh states explicitly that a construction consisting of *la-* + past tense is not allowed by Arabic (Sībawayhi/Jahn I/1: 2). Ibn

Ya‘īš, in his commentary on al-Zamaxšarī’s *al-Mufaṣṣal*, makes the same observation:

... And if the *xabar* [of the ‘*inna*-sentence] is a clause containing a verb and an agent, that verb is not precluded from being in the present tense or the past tense. If it is in the present, the *lām* occurs with it on account of its similarity to the noun, so you say ‘*inna zaydan la-yaḍribu* ‘Verily Zayd *la*-beats’ just as you say ...*la-ḍāribun* ‘... *la*-(is) beating [participle].’ But if it is in the past, the *lām* does not occur with it because there is no similarity between it and the noun, so you do not say [*]‘*inna zaydan la-ḍaraba* ‘*Verily Zayd *la*-beat’ or [*]‘*inna bakran la-qa‘ada* ‘*Verily Bakr *la*-sat’ ... [Ibn Ya‘īš VI: 25]

In terms of the meaning of ‘*inna*... *la*...', sentences with this construction were said by some grammarians (particularly of the Kūfan school) to presuppose a negative counterpart. This interpretation was prompted by the syntax of the negative construction *mā... bi*.... The particle ‘*inna* with its optional *la-* was felt to parallel in construction the negative particle *mā*, whose corresponding *bi-* was similarly optional.

| | | | | |
|---------------|---------------|------------|----------------|---|
| ‘ <i>inna</i> | <i>zaydan</i> | <i>la-</i> | <i>qā'imun</i> | ‘Verily Zayd <i>la</i> -(is) standing.’ |
| <i>mā</i> | | <i>bi-</i> | <i>qā'imin</i> | ‘Zayd <i>bi</i> -(is) not standing.’ |

The uncertainty of the grammarians as to the exact meanings of *la-* and *bi-*, which could be characterized at best as a vague “emphaticness,” led to the conviction on the part of several scholars that these two particles fulfilled the same function within, respectively, affirmative and negative emphatic statements.

Know that the *lām* of ‘*inna* occurs for the emphasizing of the *xabar*, just as ‘*inna* occurs for the emphasizing of the sentence, when you say ‘*inna zaydan qā'imun* ‘Verily Zayd (is) standing’ and ‘*inna zaydan la-qā'imun* ‘Verily Zayd *la*-(is) standing.’ The *lām* occurs in the *xabar* to emphasize it, just as ‘*inna* occurs to emphasize the sentence. Thus God (may He be exalted!) has said *fa-'inna llāha la-ḡaniyyun ḥamidun* ‘Verily God *la*-(is) free from wants, worthy of praise’ [Q XIV: 8] and ‘*inna ḥā'ulā'i la-širdimatun qalilūna wa-'inna-hum lanā la-ḡā'iḍūna wa-'in-nā la-jamī'un ḥāḍirūna* ‘Verily these *la*-(are) a small band and, verily, they *la*-(are) raging against us, but, verily, we *la*-(are) all forewarned’ [Q XXVI: 54-56/55-57]. This is the view of Sībawayh. But al-Farrā says, “This is an utterance which occurs as an affirmative response after a negation, as if someone says *mā zaydun qā'imun* ‘Zayd (is) not standing’ and you say ‘*inna zaydan qā'imun* ‘Verily Zayd (is) standing.’ You add ‘*inna* in your utterance as an affirmative to counteract the negating element in his utterance. And if he says *mā zaydun bi-qā'imin*, you say ‘*inna zaydan la-qā'imun*; you put in ‘*inna* to counter *mā*, and the *lām* to counter the *bā'*,” but this has been rejected. It has been said, “But what function is served by the introduction of the *bā'* in the *xabar* of [the two negative markers] *mā* and *laysa* when you say *mā zaydun bi-qā'imin* ‘Zayd (is) not *bi*-standing’ and *mā 'abdu llāhi bi-qā'imin* ‘‘Abd-allāh (is) not *bi*-standing’? And as

for sentences of the type of His saying '*a-laysa llāhu bi-kāfin 'abdahu*' ('Is) not God *bi*-sufficient for His servant?' [Q XXXIX: 37/36] or *wa-mā 'anta bi-mu'minin lanā* 'But you (are) not *bi*-believing us' [Q XII: 17] or *mā 'anā bi-muṣrixikum wa mā 'antum bi-muṣrixiyya* 'I (am) not listening to your cries, nor (are) you listening to mine' [Q XIV: 27/22], what is the function served by the introduction of the *bā'* here?" The answer of the grammarians as a whole to this is to say, "The *bā'* is introduced into the *xabar* as an intensifier of the negation and an emphasizer for it." Al-Zajjāj has said, "This is a good statement, and it is my opinion that the *bā'* gives notice of the negation, and identifies the beginning of the utterance as negated. For it is possible that someone may hear, when *mā zaydun qā'iman* 'Zayd is not standing' is pronounced, the end of the utterance without hearing its beginning due to inattention or the preoccupation of his mind, and it is possible that he may interpret it as affirmative, from *kāna zaydun qā'iman* 'Zayd was standing' or *amsā zaydun qā'iman* 'Zayd came to be standing' or something of that sort. But when one says *mā zaydun bi-qā'imin* 'Zayd (is) not *bi*-standing,' and he hears *bi-qā'imin*, he knows that the utterance is certainly negated. This is the function of the *bā'*, and the *lām* is added to correspond to it in the affirmative." [al-Zajjājī 60-62]

1.2.3 'The distinguishing *lām*' (*al-lām al-fāriqa*)

Just as 'lightened' (*muxaffafa*) counterparts to the conjunctions '*anna*' 'that' and *lākinna* 'but' exist in the forms '*an*' and *lākin*, there is a lightened emphatic particle '*in*' corresponding in function to '*inna*' in early Arabic texts (e.g., '*in ḍaraba la-zaydan*, comparable to '*inna-hu la-ḍaraba zaydan* 'Verily, he beat Zayd.'), although the lightened '*in*' is encountered far less frequently than either '*an*' or *lākin*. In the majority of cases in which this lightened '*in*' has been identified, the sentence to which it is prefixed is of the verb-initial (*fi'liyya*) type; the relatively few instances of '*in*'-sentences of the nominal (*ismiyya*) type have very frequently been subjected by the grammarians to alternative parsings. This distinction between the heavy particle with nominal sentences and the lightened form with verbal sentences corresponds to the distribution of the heavy and lightened forms of '*anna*/'*an* and *lākinna*/*lākin*.

| Sentence type | | | |
|---------------|---------------|-------------|-------------------------------------|
| Nominal: | ' <i>inna</i> | - <i>hu</i> | (<i>la</i> -) <i>ḍaraba zaydan</i> |
| Verbal: | ' <i>in</i> | | <i>ḍaraba la-zaydan</i> |

'Verily-he (*la*-)beat Zayd.'
'Verily beat [he] *la*-Zayd.'

Compare the distribution of the heavy and lightened shapes of '*an*(*na*)' and *lākin*(*na*).

| | | | | |
|-----------------|----------------|-------------|-----------------------|-------------------------------|
| ' <i>a'lamu</i> | ' <i>anna</i> | - <i>hu</i> | <i>ḍaraba zaydan</i> | 'I know that-he beat Zayd.' |
| ' <i>urīdu</i> | ' <i>an</i> | | <i>yaḍriba zaydan</i> | 'I want that beat [he] Zayd.' |
| ... | <i>lākinna</i> | - <i>hu</i> | <i>ḍaraba zaydan</i> | '... but-he beat Zayd.' |
| | <i>lākin</i> | | <i>ḍaraba zaydan</i> | '... but beat [he] Zayd.' |

The occurrence of the particle *la-* in association with this '*in*', unlike its occurrence with '*inna*', was regarded by the grammarians as obligatory, since the *la-* was said to distinguish between sentences containing the emphatic particle '*in*' and those containing the homophonic negative particle '*in*'. This *la-* is consequently known as *al-lām al-fāriqa bayna 'in al-muxaffafa min al-ṭaqīla wa-'in al-nāfiya* ('the *l* which distinguishes between the '*in*' which has been lightened from the heavy form and the negating '*in*'), or simply *al-lām al-fāriqa*. Were it not for the presence of the *lām*, a line such as *wa-'in kānat la-kabīratan 'illā 'alā llaḏīna hadā llāhu* (Q II: 138/143) 'And verily (= '*in*) it was *la-*a momentous thing except for those whom God had guided' would have to be read as **wa'in kānat kabīratan...* 'And it was not (= '*in*) a momentous thing...'

The parsing of such sentences as containing *al-lām al-fāriqa* is primarily associated with members of the Baṣran grammatical tradition; representatives of the Kūfan school commonly denied the existence of the lightened '*in*' as distinct from the negating '*in*', and took the particle *la-*, when it was found associated with '*in*', to correspond to the exceptive particle '*illā* (< '*in lā* 'if not'), the whole construction thus being equivalent in meaning to 'only; not... except.'⁵

...God (may He be exalted!) has said *wa-'in kāna 'aṣḥābu l-'aykati la-ṣālimīna* 'Indeed the Companions of the Woods were *la-*wrongdoers' [Q XV: 78] and '*in kānū la-yaqūlūna...* 'Indeed they used to *la-*say...' [Q XXXVII: 167] and '*in wajadnā 'akṭaruhum la-fāsiqīna* 'Indeed We have found most of them *la-*(to be) corrupt' [Q VII: 100/102]. Some students of Arabic mention that the Arabs use '*in*' with the meaning of the *mā* which is for negation: they say '*in kunta qā'iman* meaning thereby *mā kunta qā'iman* 'You were not standing.' They [also] intend the affirmative with '*in*', and abandon the sense of the negation and place the *lām* in the *xabar* in order to indicate that they do not mean the negative. So they say '*in kunta la-qā'iman* 'Indeed you were *la-*standing,' and the utterance abandons the sense of negation for the sense of affirmation—this is a good view. But some of them regard '*in*' here as having the meaning of *mā* 'not' and the *lām* as having the meaning of '*illā* 'except,' as if He had said [*]*wa-mā kāna 'akṭaruhum 'illā fāsiqīna* '*And most of them were only corrupt.' [Ibn Fāris/Bergsträsser 82-83]

⁵ Other Kūfans, however, allowed for the existence of '*in al-muxaffafa*. Muḥammad Muḥyī al-Dīn 'Abd al-Hamīd observes that al-Kisā'ī parses '*in*' as the "lightened" counterpart of the emphasizing particle before a nominal clause, but as the negating particle before a verbal clause (Ibn al-'Anbārī II: 641-642).

Ibn al-'Anbārī describes the Kūfan and Baṣran sides of the debate in Question 90 of his book on the differing views of the two schools. He summarizes the Kūfan position and counters it in the following terms:

As for the Kūfans, they support their claim by saying, "We only say this because it appears frequently in the Book of God and the speech of the Arabs. God (may He be exalted!) has said *wa'in kādū la-yastafizzūnaka min al-'arḍi liyuxrijūka minhā* 'And 'in they all but succeeded in *la*-stirring you up from the earth so as to expel you from it' [Q XVII: 78/76], that is, *mā kādū 'illā yastafizzūnaka*; and He has said *wa'in yakādu llaḍīna kafarū la-yuzliqūnaka bi-'absārihim* 'And those who are Unbelievers 'in all but *la*-trip you up by their looks' [Q LXVIII: 51] that is, *wa-mā kādū 'illā yuzliqūnaka* 'they did not...'; and He (may He be exalted!) has said 'in *kāna wa'du rabbīnā la-maf'ūlan* 'The promise of our Lord 'in has been *la*-accomplished' [Q XVII: 108] that is, *mā kāna wa'du rabbīnā 'illā maf'ūlan* 'the promise of our Lord was not except accomplished.' Moreover, the poet ['Atika bint Zayd al-'Adawiyya] has said,

šallat yamīnuka 'in qatalta
la-musliman

May your right hand wither! 'in
you have killed *la*-a Muslim

kutibat 'alayka 'uqūbatu
l-muta'ammidi

There is ordained for you the
penalty of the willful.

that is, *mā qatalta 'illā musliman* 'You have not killed anyone other than a Muslim.' Examples of this in their speech are too frequent to enumerate."

... As for the response to the words of the Kūfans: As for their proving by Qur'ānic verses and whatever else they may adduce that 'in has the meaning of *mā* and the *lām* the meaning of 'illā, they have no proof of anything in this, since all of this is [equally] justifiable according to the view to which we have come, by which 'in is lightened from the heavy 'inna, and the *lām* is the *lām* of emphasis. What points to this is that the 'in in the sense of *mā* does not bring along the *lām*, as God (may He be exalted!) has said 'in *il-kāfirūna 'illā fī yurūrīn* 'The Unbelievers are only in delusion' [Q LXVII: 20], and as God (may He be exalted!) has said 'in 'antum 'illā takḍībūna 'You are only liars' [Q XXXVI: 14/15], and as God (may He be exalted!) has said 'in *hāḍā 'illā 'ifkun iḥṭarāhu* 'This is only a lie he has invented' [Q XXV: 5/4] and other passages—the *lām* appears with none of these.

As for their saying, "The *lām* in *la-yastafizzūnaka* and *la-yuzliqūnaka* and *la-maf'ūlan*, etc., in these positions is in the place of 'illā in these positions," we say, "This is incorrect. For if it were allowable for one to say, 'The *lām* is used with the meaning of 'illā,' then it would be appropriate to regard as allowable [*] *jā'anī l-qawmu la-zaydan* '*The people came to me *la-zaydan*' with the meaning of *illā zaydan* 'except for Zayd.' But since this is not allowable, it indicates the incorrectness of what you have come to, and this *lām* has only appeared with the 'in that is lightened from the heavy form because the lightened 'in in pronunciation has the appearance of that ['in] by which one intends negation, and when this led to confusion it was brought forth to distinguish between them. So what is present in order to make a distinction and eliminate confusion you have made into a source of confusion and the elimination of the

distinction, and this is an extreme deviation from what is correct and right. God is All-Knowing.” [Ibn al-ʿAnbārī II: 640-643]

Sentences employing the lightened *ʿin* are much less frequent in the corpus of classical literature than those with *ʿinna*. Since the formal distinction between the written shapes of the two forms *ʿin* and *ʿinna* depended upon the largely optional *tašdīd* (gemination) and vowelizing diacritics, there is in principle a good possibility that in given passages instances of one have been taken for instances of the other (that is, if we allow for the existence of nominal *ʿin*-sentences). Even in the Qurʾān, in which the writing of the diacritics became obligatory at a very early point in time, there is the opportunity for confusion between *ʿin* and *ʿinna*: the notorious case of Q XX: 66/63 comes to mind, which is written as *ʿin hādāni la-sāhirāni* ‘in these two *la-*(are) sorcerers’ but which several of the reading traditions read as *ʿinna hādāni...* or even *ʿinna hādāyini...* This problematical passage will be discussed at greater length in Chapter Two below (§2.5.2).

1.2.4 ‘The *lām* of the oath’ (*lām al-qasam*) or ‘the *lām* of the apodosis of the oath’ (*lām jawāb al-qasam*)

The Arabic oath, in the view of the grammatical tradition, is a complex of two clauses linked by one of the *jawāb*-particles. The first of these clauses (*al-muqṣam*) is a performative sentence in which the speaker underscores the degree to which he is committed to the veracity of his statement by invoking some power or authority to vouch for his testimony, or by adducing some entity of great value or significance to him. The performative clause may be either fully expressed as a verbal sentence (e.g., ‘I swear by God that...’), or, more frequently, abbreviated to a simple noun phrase in which a surviving preposition or case marker attests to the syntax of the underlying clause—e.g., *bi-llāhi* for *ḥalaftu bi-llāhi* ‘(I swear) by God...’, *la-ʿamruka* for **la-ʿamruka mā ʿuqsimu bihi* ‘Your life (is what I swear by)...’ (Pedersen 1914: 18). Indeed, we find that the grammarians may even assume the underlying existence of an oath-clause when it has been entirely elided, if the syntax and sense of the surviving clause warrant this assumption—hence the classification of the constructions featuring *la-* + the energetic form of the verb, or *la-* + the particle *qad*, as the ‘apodosis of the oath’ even in cases in which there is no overt oath visible (see, for example, §1.2.1 above for debates over the *lām al-ibtidāʾ* and the verbal clause, and §1.2.2 for the *lām* with the conjunctions *ʿinna* and *ʿanna*).

Connecting the oath to the second clause, the assertion (*al-muqṣam ʿalayhi*), is one of a small set of *jawāb*-particles. This set is divided between those particles associated with negative oaths and those associated with affirmative oaths. Thus Ibn Manḍūr describes the oath construction in the following terms:

... The oath [*al-muqṣam*] is a clause connected with another—this being that which is sworn to [*al-muqṣam 'alayhi*—in order that the second may be rendered emphatic by the first. They connect the two clauses by particles called by the grammarians the ‘apodosis of the oath’ [*jawāb al-qasam*]. These are *'inna* (with the vowel *i* and gemination) and the *lām*, which have a single meaning, as when you say: *wa-llāhi 'inna zaydan xayrun minka* ‘By God, *'inna* Zayd (is) better than you!’ and *wa-llāhi la-zaydun xayrun minka* ‘By God, *la*-Zayd (is) better than you!’ or when you say: *wa-llāhi la-yaqūmanna zaydun* ‘By God, *la*-will rise Zayd!’ When they place the *lām* of the oath on a verb in the future [e.g., *la-yaqūmanna*] they put at its end the *nūn* (either geminated or ‘lightened’) to emphasize the future and remove it from the present tense—there is no avoiding this. Others [of these particles] are *'in* (ungeminated and with the vowel *i*) and *mā*, and these have a single meaning as when you say: *wa-llāhi mā fa'altu* and *wa-llāhi 'in fa'altu* with one meaning ‘By God, I did not do...!’ And another is *lā* as when you say *wa-llāhi lā 'af'alu* ‘By God, I will not do...!’ The oath is not attached to what is sworn by anything other than one of these five particles, although they may be elided and assumed [*murāda*]... (Ibn Manḍūr: 561)

As noted above in the grammarians’ discussion of the relation of the *'inna... la-...* construction to the *mā... bi-...* construction (§1.2.2), the two ‘emphatic’ particles *'inna* and *lām* are regarded as positive counterparts to the negative markers.

In a non-negative oath, therefore, the role of *jawāb*-particle is played by *'inna*, by *la-*, or by both (in the last case, of course, with *ta'xīr* of the *la-* as described above under *al-lām al-muzaḥliqa* (§1.2.2)). The nature of the clause to which the particle is added is quite restricted. For verb-initial (*fi'liyya*) clauses, a past-tense verb must be preceded by the perfect particle *qad* (*bi-llāhi la-qad fa'ala* ‘By God, *la*-he has done...!’), while a present/future-tense verb must be marked with the suffixes *-(a)n-* or *-(a)nn-*, the so-called ‘energetic’ or ‘energetic’ endings (e.g., *bi-llāhi la-yaf'al-an*, *la-yaf'al-anna* ‘By God, *la*-he will surely do...!’), a set of verbal suffixes whose function is only incompletely understood but which are described as having the effect of restricting the temporal reference of the non-past verb to the future and lending some sense of ‘emphaticness’ to the utterance. Consequently, the two most familiar elements of the verbal paradigm, the basic past (**billāhi la-fa'ala* ‘By God, *la*-he did...!’) and the basic present/future (**billāhi la-yaf'alu* ‘By God, *la*-he does...!’), are excluded from such oath constructions.

For substantive-initial (*ismiyya*) clauses, the *jawāb*-particle may be *'inna*, *la-*, or both, although the construction with *la-* alone appears to be restricted to sentences lacking a verbal *xabar* (e.g., *bi-llāhi la-zaydun karīmun* ‘By God, *la*-Zayd (is) noble!’). It will be recalled from the discussion of *al-lām al-muzaḥliqa* above (§1.2.2) that there was an

ongoing debate among the grammarians over the proper interpretation of the various '*inna... la...*' structures, the consensus being that the distinction between structures featuring *lām al-ibtidā'* and those requiring the assumption of an underlying oath was made manifest only through the '*inna'anna*' opposition in the environment of a preceding verb of cognition (*fi'l al-qalb*). Ibn Hišām's typology of the two structures, which, it will be remembered, is based upon the nature of the *xabar*, ran along the lines indicated in Table 3 on the following page. A pair of sentences such as '*inna zaydan la-yaqūmu*' and '*inna zaydan la-yaqūmanna*', while they may appear to be closely parallel and distinguished solely by the form of the verb, are in fact ascribed radically different constructions. In the first sentence we find a *lām al-ibtidā'*, while in the second the grammarians infer the existence of an underlying oath ((**wallāhi*) '*inna zaydan la-yaqūmanna*') and consequently interpret the *la-* (as well as the '*inna*') as representatives of a quite different type of particle, the *jawāb* of the oath. Perhaps more surprisingly, they are obliged to ascribe entirely different underlying structures to '*inna zaydan la-karīmun*' 'Verily Zayd (is) noble' and *wallāhi* '*inna zaydan la-karīmun*' 'By God, verily Zayd (is) noble,' despite the fact that they differ only in the absence vs. presence of an overt oath: while the *la-* in the former is an instance of the *lām al-ibtidā'*, the *la-* following *wallāhi* is to be parsed as the *jawāb* of the oath.

| Type of <i>lām</i> | Type of <i>xabar</i> | |
|----------------------------|---|---|
| <i>al-Lām al-muzahliqa</i> | Substantival phrase | ' <i>inna zaydan la-karīmun</i> 'Verily Zayd <i>la-(is)</i> noble.' |
| | Present-tense verb phrase | ' <i>inna zaydan la-yaqūmu</i> 'Verily Zayd <i>la-rises</i> .' |
| | Prepositional phrase | ' <i>inna zaydan la-fī d-dāri</i> 'Verily Zayd <i>la-(is)</i> in the house.' |
| | Past-tense verb with <i>qad</i> (majority view) | ' <i>inna zaydan la-qad qāma</i> 'Verily Zayd <i>la-has risen</i> .' |
| <i>Lām al-qasam</i> | Past-tense verb | ' <i>inna zaydan la-qāma</i> 'Verily Zayd <i>la-rose</i> .' |
| | Energic-form verb | ' <i>inna zaydan la-yaqūmanna</i> 'Verily Zayd <i>la-will surely rise</i> .' |

Table 3: *Lām al-ibtidā'* and *lām al-qasam* with '*inna*'

Certain verbal structures—viz. verbs to which an energetic suffix is appended, or which are preceded by the particle *qad*—thus are taken to be inherently “emphatic,” but this semantic feature is inextricably bound up with the syntactic reflection of “emphaticness,” the oath. An oath is frequently assumed to lie at the heart of such structures, even though, as we have seen, it is quite possible that the oath itself will have been elided. Moreover, as Ibn Manḍūr notes above, the *jawāb*-particles may also be elided. Of the maximal expansion of the oath structure given below, we

may thus distinguish between (1) partial deletion of the oath-clause, leaving only the formulaic oath-noun, (2) complete deletion of the oath-clause, the presence of the *jawāb*-particle indicating the underlying presence of the oath, and (3) the elision of both the oath and the *jawāb*-particle.

| | |
|------------------------------|---|
| 'uqsimu billāhi la-yajī'anna | 'I swear by God, <i>la</i> -he will surely come!' |
| (1) billāhi la-yajī'anna | 'By God, <i>la</i> -he will surely come!' |
| (2) la-yajī'anna | ' <i>la</i> -he will surely come!' |
| (3) yajī'anna | 'He will surely come!' ⁶ |

By this view, all four sentences are unequivocally to be parsed by their underlying structure as oaths—the energetic form of the verb allows no doubt of this.

... And this *lām* and the *nūn* [of the energetic ending], when they occur with the future, are only found with the oath or a virtual oath. Sībawayh says, "I asked al-Xalīl about his view on *la-yaf'alanna* '*la*-he will surely do...' when it occurs in the initial position, and he said, 'It is with a virtual oath, for when you say *la-taṭaliqanna* '*la*-you will surely leave' it is as if you said *wallāhi la-taṭaliqanna* 'By God, *la*-you will surely leave!'..." [Ibn Ya'īš 21]

The oath containing an energetic verb, it may be noted, constitutes one of the two environments in which the grammarians claim that the appearance of the emphatic *lām* is obligatory (the other being, as we have seen above (§1.2.3), *al-lām al-fāriqa* in association with the emphatic particle '*in*'). As in the case of *al-lām al-fāriqa*, in which the appearance of *la-* was said to distinguish between structures with the emphatic '*in*' and those with the negative '*in*', the obligatoriness of *la-* in energetic oaths is regarded as a consequence of its function: the distribution of labor between the *lām* of the particle and the *nūn* of the verb makes the appearance of both necessary in order for the sentence to be grammatical.

And if someone says, "Then why are the *lām* and the *nūn* necessary together? Is it not acceptable to limit oneself to one of them, since they are both for emphasis?" the answer to this is that al-Xalīl and Sībawayh and al-

⁶ Cf. al-Zajjājī 114-116. Elision of the *lām* with an energetic verb is regarded by al-Farrā' as acceptable only when the verb is preceded by a conjoined energetic verb marked with *la-*. He cites as an example the following verse of 'Abū Muka'ib (or Muk'it) al-'Asadī:

| | |
|--|---|
| <i>fa-la-ya'zilanna wa-tabku'anna</i> <i>liqāhuhū</i> | <i>wa-yu'allilanna ṣabiyyahū bi-s-samārī</i> |
| And <i>la</i> -he will surely come into dire circumstances, and his milch- camels will surely run dry, | and he will surely give his boy diluted milk to drink. (al-Zajjājī 114-115) |

Farrā' and al-Kisā'i agree that the *lām* and the *nūn* occur together here because the *lām* occurs to affirm what has been sworn to, just as *lā* occurs in the negative in your saying *wa-llāhi lā yaqūmu zaydun* 'By God, Zayd does not rise!' while the *nūn* is necessary at the end of the verb in order that a distinction might be made thereby between a verb of the present and a verb of the future, [the *nūn*] being the indicator of the future. When you say *wa-llāhi la-yaxrujanna zaydun* 'By God, *la*-Zayd will surely go out!' the *lām* indicates the affirmativeness and the *nūn* the future tense and the exclusion from the present. Each one of them has indicated a single meaning. If you do not wish the future it is acceptable to say *wa-llāhi la-yaqūmu wa-yuṣallī* 'By God, *la*-he is standing and praying!' of one who is in that situation... [al-Zajjājī 113-114]

On rare occasions we encounter the absence of the particle *qad*, which under normal circumstances is held to be obligatory in the oath construction with the affirmative past tense. Thus al-Zamaxšarī claims that one may say *wa-llāhi la-kaḏaba* 'By God *la*-he lied!' and cites the following verse of Imru' al-Qays in support of this opinion:

ḥalaftu lahā billāhi ḥalfata fājirin la-nāmū ...
'I swore to her by God an empty oath *la*-(that) they slept...

In short, the Arabic oath is a construction as much semantic as it is syntactic: although there are a number of structural features regarded as characteristic of the oath, few if any of them appear obligatorily at the surface level. In the absence of these features, the judgments of the grammarians will vary as to whether a given sentence is to be parsed as an oath or not, and whether the *lām* is a *lām* of the oath or, for example, a *lām* of the commencement.

On account of the intensity of the emphaticness of [the *lām* of the commencement] and its affirming what it occurs with, some people assume an oath before it and say, "It is the *lām* of the oath," as if the underlying form of *la-zaydun qā'imun* 'la-Zayd (is) standing' were *wa-llāhi la-zaydun qā'imun* 'By God, Zayd (is) standing!' with the oath deleted and the *lām* serving to indicate it. It is not to be denied that a sentence of this sort may be an oath, since this *lām* is read with the vowel *a* just as the *lām* of the oath is, and since it occurs in sentences just as the *lām* of the oath does, and since it is an emphazier and affirmer just as the *lām* of the oath is an affirmer. But sometimes it is the *lām* of the oath and sometimes it is the *lām* of the commencement—their pronunciation is the same, but the intention is indicated by the meaning. Do you not see that, if someone says *la-zaydun qā'imun* 'la-Zayd (is) standing' to affirm his statement, one does not say to him, "You have broken your oath!" if Zayd is not standing. But when the future-tense verb is found after it together with the energetic *nūn*, heavy or light, it is the *lām* of the oath, whether the oath is mentioned before it or not... We have only made this judgment because, had the oath been present, it would not have been acceptable for the affirmative future verb to occur without the *lām* and the *nūn*, as we have mentioned... [al-Zajjājī 70-71]

1.2.5 'The *lāms* of the apodoses of [the counterfactual conditional particles] *law* and *lawlā*' (*lām jawāb law wa-lām jawāb lawlā*)

The model of the syntactic structure assumed by the grammarians for conditional sentences is analogous to what we have seen for the oath: there are two consecutive clauses, the second of which is known as the 'response' (*jawāb*). The first clause, the *šarṭ* ('condition'), unlike the oath, is rarely if ever elided; it is preceded by one of the conditional particles '*in*' (for potential conditions), *law* (for counterfactual conditions), or '*iḍā*' (for temporal conditions). Both the *šarṭ*-clause and the *jawāb*-clause are typically verbal (i.e., *fi'liyya*, or verb-initial), the verb taking either the past-tense form (*qatala*) or the jussive form (*yaqtul*)—see Table 4 on the next page. Negative conditional constructions are formed using the negative of the past tense, which consists of *lam* + the jussive ('*in lam yadxul zaydun lam 'aḍrib-hu* 'If Zayd does not come in, I will not strike him'). However, the negative counterpart of *law*, *lawlā* 'were it not for...' takes a noun phrase as its *šarṭ* (or occasionally a clause preceded by the complementizer '*anna*'), this noun phrase being regarded by many grammarians as the *mubtada'* of a nominal clause which has been stranded by the elision of its *xabar*.

| <i>Šarṭ</i> -clause | <i>Jawāb</i> -clause | |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------|---|
| ' <i>in daxala (yadxul) zaydun</i> | <i>ḍarabtu-hu ('aḍrib-hu)</i> | 'If Zayd comes in, I shall strike him.' |
| <i>law daxala (yadxul) zaydun</i> | <i>ḍarabtu-hu ('aḍrib-hu)</i> | 'If Zayd had come in, I would have struck him.' |
| ' <i>iḍā daxala (yadxul) zaydun</i> | <i>ḍarabtu-hu ('aḍrib-hu)</i> | 'When Zayd comes in, I shall strike him.' |

Table 4: Arabic conditional constructions

Among the various conditional structures, the particle *la-* is frequently found in the *law*- and *lawlā*-constructions prefixed to the *jawāb*-clause.

| | |
|---|---|
| <i>law daxala zaydun la-ḍarabtu-hu.</i> | 'Had Zayd come in, <i>la</i> -I would have struck him.' |
| <i>lawlā zaydun la-ḍarabtu-hu</i> | 'Were it not for Zayd, <i>la</i> -I would have struck him.' |

The position of the particle with respect to the *jawāb* of the conditional is thus the same as that of the particle to the *jawāb*-clause of the oath. These various types of *la-* are therefore often thought of as representatives of a larger category known as *lām al-jawāb* 'the *lām* of the response.'

| Clause 1 | | <i>jawāb</i> -clause | |
|---------------------|------------|-----------------------|---|
| Oath | <i>la-</i> | ' <i>aḍribanna-hu</i> | '(By God) <i>la</i> -I shall surely strike him!' |
| <i>law daxala</i> | | <i>ḍarabtu-hu</i> | 'Had he entered <i>la</i> -I would have struck him.' |
| <i>lawlā zaydun</i> | | <i>ḍarabtu-hu</i> | 'If it had not been for Zayd <i>la</i> -I would have struck him.' |

On the other hand, the fact that the particle *la-* appears to be obligatory when the conditional structure is preceded by an overt oath has led some to claim that the *law* and *lawlā*-constructions containing *la-* are actually a subset of the oath construction.

... Some of them make this *lām* [stand for] an oath at its head... and those who assert that it is the *lām* which occurs in the *jawāb* of the oath [claim that] when you say *law ji'tanī la-'akramtuka* 'if you had come to me *la*-I would have honored you,' its underlying shape is *wallāhi law ji'tanī la-'akramtuka* 'By God, if you had come to me *la*-I would have honored you.' Similarly with the *lām* in the *jawāb* of *lawlā*—when you say *lawlā zaydun la-'akramtuka* 'Had it not been for Zayd, *la*-I would have honored you,' its underlying shape is *wa-llāhi lawlā zaydun la-'akramtuka*. 'By God, had it not been for Zayd *la*-I would have honored you.' When the oath is overt it is not possible to omit the *lām*, as in [the verse]

fa-wa-llāhi lawlā llāhu lā šay'a
ḡayruhū
 'And, by God, were it not for
 God—there is nothing other
 than Him!—

la-zu'zi'a min hāḍā s-sarīri
jawānibuh
la-the sides would shake loose
 from this bed!'

[Ibn Ya'īš 22-23]

In this connection Ibn Hišām cites the following comments by 'Abū l-Faṭh.

... 'Abū l-Faṭh maintains that the *lām* following *law* and *lawlā*... is the *lām* of the *jawāb* of an understood oath, but in this he is mistaken. Granted, it is tempting to believe that in *wa-law 'annahum 'āmanū wa-ttaqaw la-maṭūbatun min 'indi llāhi xayrun* (II: 97/103) 'And, if they believed and were faithful, *la*-repentance before God would be best' on the basis of the fact that the *lām* [here] is the *lām* of an understood oath, as is indicated by the clause being noun-initial. As for [the alternative interpretation, namely] the view that it is *lām* of the *jawāb* of *law* and that the noun-initial clause has taken the place of a verb-initial clause, as in [the verse⁷]

⁷ In his reading of the following passage Ibn Hišām takes the verb *ja'alat* to have the meaning 'commence'; it is followed by a nominal clause *marta'uhā qarību(n)* 'her pasturing-place (is) near,' rather than by a verbal clause such as *ja'alat tuyannī* 'she commenced singing.' Alternate readings of the verse are possible, however.

*wa-qad ja'alat qulūšu banī
suhaylin*

And the passage of the she-camel
of the Banū Suhayl

*min al-'akwāri muratti'uhā
qaribu*

Has come to be close to the
saddles

he has gone astray in this. This fact is among the things which indicate in my opinion the weakness of 'Abū l-Fath's view, since if the *lām* after *law* were ever in the *jawāb* of an understood oath one would find numerous instances of the *jawāb* after *law* being noun-initial, such as [*]*law jā'anī la'anā 'ukrimu-hu* 'if he had come to me, *la-I* (= clause-initial pronoun) am honoring him,' as happens frequently in the *jawāb* of the oath. [Ibn Hišām 259]

1.2.6 'The *lām* which paves the way (for the oath)' (*al-lām al-muwaṭṭi'a li-l-qasam*)

While the interpretation of irreal conditional sentences marked with *law(lā)* and *la-* as oaths is debated by the grammarians, conditional sentences marked with 'in 'if' and *la-* are more generally recognized as oaths. In contrast to the *law(lā)* structures, in this construction the particle *la-* appears at the head of the condition clause (the *ṣarṭ*) to form a collocation *la-'in*; the *la-* is not infrequently found recapitulated before the *jawāb* as well. As an example, the following Qur'ānic verse (LIX: 12) provides a string of three such structures, the last of which contains a *jawāb* with repetition of the *la-*.

*la-'in 'uxrijū lā yaxrujūna
ma'ahum*

wa-la-'in qūtilū lā yaṣṣurūnahum

*wa-la-'in naṣarūhum la-yuwallūna
l-'adbāra*

'*la*-If they are expelled, they will not
go out with them;

and *la*-if they are fought against, they
will not come to their aid;

and *la*-if they come to their aid, *la-*
they will surely turn their backs.'

It is noteworthy that, while the verb of the first clause (i.e., the *ṣarṭ*) is in the form appropriate for a conditional sentence (viz. the past tense, as here, or the jussive), the syntax of the second clause (the *jawāb*) is entirely unlike the normal conditional. Had LIX: 12 been expressed in the canonical shape for conditionals, we would have expected the verbs of the apodoses to take the form **lam yaxrujū*, **lam yaṣṣurūhum*, and **wallow/*yuwallū*. In their place we find in LIX: 12 two negative present-tense verbs and an energetic verb—the forms, it should be noted, expected for the *jawāb* of an oath rather than the *jawāb* of a conditional. It is therefore not surprising that the grammarians have analyzed the entire construction as preceded by an understood oath. Indeed, one of the technical names for the *la-* appearing in this construction is *al-lām al-muwaṭṭi'a li-l-qasam* 'the *l* which paves the way for the oath' (or *al-lām al-mu'dīna* 'the foreshadowing *l*').

... the *lām* appears on the instrument of the condition [i.e., the conditional particle '*in*'] to foreshadow that the *jawāb* following it is constructed on an oath before it, not on the condition, and hence it is called the 'foreshadowing' *lām*, and it is called the 'paver of the way' also, because it 'paves the way' for the *jawāb* for the oath, that is, it clears the way for it... [Ibn Hišām 259-260]

Several of the grammarians are careful to state that this *lām* is not itself the *jawāb* of the oath: if the oath in question takes a *jawāb*-particle, it will be the *la-* prefixed to the apodosis rather than the *la-* before the protasis.

... Some of them call it the *lām al-šarṭ* [the '*lām* of the condition'] because of its appearance on the particle of the condition, and some call it 'the paver of the way' because it precedes the *jawāb* of the oath, as if it 'paved the way' for the mentioning of the *jawāb*. It is not a *jawāb* of the oath (although that is its underlying origin) because the oath does not take a condition as its *jawāb*, just as it does not take [another] oath as its *jawāb*, since the condition follows the model of the oath to the extent that each of them requires a *jawāb*—the oath and its *jawāb* are two sentences requiring one another and becoming like a single sentence, just as the condition and its *jawāb* are like a single sentence. For this reason the lawyers sometimes call the 'conditional repudiation' [*al-ta'liq*] with a condition a 'vow' [*yamīnan*]; the Imām Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan al-Ṣaybānī has called a book of his *The Book of Vows*, although most of it is connected with conditional oaths of the sort '*in daxalti d-dāra fa-'anti ṭāliqun* 'if you enter the house, you are divorced!' and '*in 'akalti wa-šaribtī fa-'anti ṭāliqun* 'if you eat and drink, you are divorced!' and so forth. [The *jawāb* of the oath, on the other hand,] is when you say *wa-llāhi la-'in 'akramtanī la-'ukrimannaka* 'By God, *la*-if you honor me *la*-I shall surely honor you!' the first *lām* being for emphasis and to pave the way for the *jawāb*, and the *jawāb* being *la-'ukrimannaka*. This is the *jawāb* of the oath and the condition is nullified [i.e., its apodosis is lost] and lacks a governing effect [on the verb of the following clause], because you have begun with the oath and left the condition a parenthetical interpolation. When an actual conditional construction and an oath come together [i.e., when the clause following the conditional clause is actually in the shape of a conditional apodosis, with the verb in the past tense or jussive form], the *jawāb* belongs to whichever of the two [the oath or the *šarṭ*] precedes the other and is at the beginning. An instance of the condition-clause in initial position is when you say '*in taqum wa-llāhi 'aqum* 'if you rise, by God! I will rise,' putting the *jawāb* in the jussive [*'aqum*] because of the conditional particle and nullifying the oath because it is an interpolation. An instance of the oath in initial position is when you say *wa-llāhi la-'in 'ataytanī la-'ataytuka* 'By God, *la*-if you come to me *la*-I shall come to you!' where the first *lām* 'paves the way' and the second acts as the *jawāb* of the oath and confirmation for it. There is no governing effect to the *šarṭ*, as may be seen by His saying—may He be exalted!—*la-'in 'uxrijū lā yaxrujūna ma'ahum wa-la-'in qūtilū lā yaṣurūnahum* [Q LIX: 12—see above]. The *jawāb* here belongs to the elided oath and the condition is nullified, as is indicated by the retention of the *nūn* [the marker of the indicative mood] in the negative verb, since, if it had been a *jawāb* for the

condition, it would have been in the jussive mood and the *nūn* elided...
[Ibn Ya'īš 22]

The construction containing *al-lām al-muwaṭṭi'a* is thus in a sense held to be a subset of the oath construction. As with other oaths, the role of the oath in such sentences is to affirm the veracity of the utterance. The veracity of the *jawāb* is not asserted to be absolute, however, as in *wa-llāhi la-qad ḍarabtu zaydan* 'By God, *la*-I have struck Zayd!' or *wa-llāhi la-'aḍribanna zaydan* 'By God, *la*-I shall surely strike Zayd!' but contingent upon an explicitly stated prior condition—once this condition has been fulfilled, the speaker will already have averred to the complete necessity or inevitability of the fact asserted in the *jawāb*: *wa-llāhi la'-in daxala zaydun la-'aḍribannahu* 'By God, *la*-if Zayd comes in *la*-I shall surely strike him!'

Although there is an oath (either overt or underlying) at the beginning of each *la'-in* sentence, the *la-* of *la'-in* is not to be confused with the *lām* of the *jawāb* of the oath. If there is such a *lām* present in the sentence (as there very often is), it will be located at the head of the apodosis. The *la-* of *la'-in* is held to be something quite distinct, the marker of a *jawāb* yet to come. In a sentence such as LIX: 12, *wa-la-'in naṣarūhum la-yuwallunna l-'adbāra* 'and *la*-if they aid them *la*-they will surely turn their backs (on them),' the first *la-* serves simply to indicate the presence of the underlying oath referring to the final clause of the entire construction.

One difficulty which arises from this interpretation of *la'-in* sentences is the problem of the syntax of the final clause. As we have seen, since this clause is held to be the *jawāb* of the oath, it very frequently shows one of the various features associated with the oath (the emphasizing particles *la-* and '*inna*, the verbal particle *qad*, the energetic verbal endings, etc.). The structure of the apodosis of *wa-llāhi la'-in daxala zaydun la-'aḍribannahu* 'By God, *la*-if Zayd comes in *la*-I shall surely strike him!' is thus entirely parallel to a simple oath construction such as *wa-llāhi la-'aḍribannahu* 'By God, *la*-I shall surely strike him!'

However, this parallelism is not absolute. We have already seen Ibn Ya'īš cite as an example *wa-llāhi la'-in 'ataytanī la-'ataytuka* 'By God, *la*-if you come to me, *la*-I shall come to you!' in which the verb of the apodosis *la-'ataytuka* '*la*-I shall come to you' appears in the past tense, the form expected for the apodosis of a normal conditional clause such as '*in 'ataytanī 'ataytuka* 'if you come to me I shall come to you.' In this case the governing effect ('*amal*') of the protasis appears to have won out for some reason over the governing effect of the oath. It thus seems that there are two options for the shape taken by the final clause of *la'-in* sentences, with no clear distinction in significance.

| | |
|--|--|
| <i>la-'in balla lī 'arđi bilālun bi-daf'atin</i> | <i>'akun ka-llađi šāba l-ḥayā 'arđahu</i> |
| <i>mina l-ḡayṭi fī yumnā yadayhi</i> | <i>llatī saqāha wa-qad kānat jadīban</i> |
| <i>nsikābuhā</i> | <i>janābuhā</i> |
| <i>la-If Bilāl moistens my land with a</i> | <i>I will be like someone for whom the</i> |
| <i>pouring of rain, the pouring of</i> | <i>rain has flooded his land which he</i> |
| <i>which is in his right hand,</i> | <i>wished to be rained on, after its</i> |
| | <i>surrounding area suffered from</i> |
| | <i>drought</i> |

(Farazdaq 54,4)

1.2.7 'The *lām* of wonder not governing the genitive' (*lām al-ta'ajjub ḡayr al-jār*)

Ibn Hišām briefly cites Ibn Xālawayh's interpretation of the *la-* prefixed to stative verbs in such exclamatory clauses as *la-ḡarufa zaydun* and *la-karuma 'amrun*...

... with the meaning of *mā 'aḡrafa zaydun* 'How charming Zayd is!' and *mā 'akrama 'amrun* 'How noble 'Amr is!' Ibn Xālawayh mentions it in his book called *al-Jumal*, but in my opinion it is either a *lām al-ibtidā'* occurring with a past-tense verb (on account of the similarity of its defective conjugation to [the declension] of the noun) or the *lām* of the *jawāb* of a covert oath. [Ibn Hišām 261]

1.2.8 'The supplementary *lām*' (*al-lām al-zā'ida*)

Under the heading *al-lām al-zā'ida*, Ibn Hišām (256-259) lists the following anomalous instances in which the particle *la-* is found despite the fact that the syntactic environments in question do not fall under any of the categories listed above.

(a) The line of verse *'ummu l-ḡulaysi la-'ajūzun šahrabah* 'Umm al-Ḥulays *la-*(is) an old woman, a *šahraba*' (from a poem ascribed variously to Ru'ba, to 'Antara b. 'Arūs, and to Yazīd b. Dabba), in which the *la-* is prefixed to the *xabar* of a nominal sentence rather than to its *mubtada'*. It has therefore been supposed (§1.2.1) that what appears to be the *xabar* is actually a complete nominal clause with its *mubtada'* deleted (**'ummu l-ḡulaysi la-hiya 'ajūzun šahrabah* '*Umm al-Ḥulays *la-she* (is) an old woman, a *šahraba*'), and that the *la-* is therefore a normal *lām al-ibtidā'*.⁹

⁹ Al-Zajjājī discusses other, similar cases in which *la-* appears to be prefixed to the *xabar* of a nominal sentence rather than to its *mubtada'*, such as *zaydun la-yanṭaliqanna* 'Zayd *la-*will surely leave,' *'abdullāhi la-'abūhu 'afḡalu minka* 'Abdu-llāh *la-*his father is more gracious than you.' The Baṣrans allow for the existence of such constructions, on the assumption that the *ibtidā'* originally preceded the noun (*wa-'innamā jāza 'indahum lammā kāna l-mubtada'u qad sabaqa l-ibtidā'u 'ilayhi fa-rafa'ahu, wa-kāna mā ba'dahu xabaran 'anhu, wa-l-lāmu mu'akkidatun lahu*); the Kūfans do not accept such constructions at all,

(b) After the complementizer '*anna*' governed by '*illā*' 'except' in Sa'īd b. Jubayr's reading of the Qur'ānic verse XXV: 22/20, *wa-mā 'arsalnā qablaka minā l-mursalīna 'illā 'annahum la-ya'kulūna l-ṭa'āma wa-yamšūna fī l-'aswāqi...* 'And We sent prior to you only apostles who ate food and walked in the markets...' (lit. '... We did not send... except that they *la*-eat... and walk...'). The canonical reading has '*illā 'innahum la-ya'kulūna*' (with the vowel *i* in the complementizer), which agrees with what has been said above concerning the correlation between '*anna*... Ø...' and '*inna*... *la*...' in subordinate clauses. Ibn Hišām cites al-Mubarrad, however, as saying that the appearance of *la-* after '*anna*' is not to be used as a model for analogy (*maqīsan*), implying that al-Mubarrad admits that, even though they were not productive, such formations were encountered.

(c) After the conjunction *lākinna* 'but' in the anonymous verse

| | |
|---|---|
| <i>yalūmūnanī fī ḥubbi laylā 'awāḍilī</i> | <i>wa-lākinnī min ḥubbiḥā la-'amīdū</i> |
| My critics reproach me for loving | But I am, on account of loving her, <i>la</i> - |
| Laylā | heartbroken |

In this case and the case of XXV: 22/20, al-Mubarrad and the Kūfan grammarians claim that the *la-* cannot be the *lām al-ibtidā'*. Another view, however, takes the *lākinna-* in this verse to be a contraction of *lākin*, the "lightened" counterpart of *lākinna*, and the particle '*inna*' (**lākin 'inna* - > **lākin inna* - > *lākinn-*); although such a contraction would be unparalleled elsewhere, it would allow for the interpretation of the *la-* as the normal marker of the *xabar* of an '*inna*'. Al-Zajjājī, insisting that the *lām* in this passage (or rather, in the variant of this passage which he discusses) cannot be marking the *xabar* of *lākinna-*, provides the following discussion:

... and [the *lām*] does not occur with *lākinna-*, despite the fact that [the latter] is an emphasizer just as '*inna*' emphasizes, because it occurs as a *jawāb* to your saying *mā jā'anī 'amrun lākinna zaydan jā'anī* 'Amr did not come to me, but Zayd came to me.' Nothing may precede this *jawāb*-clause, lest there be severing of [the first clause] from whatever is its *jawāb*. If the *lām* were allowed to appear in the *xabar* of *lākinna-* [i.e., **mā jā'anī 'amrun lākinna zaydan la-jā'anī*] it would be necessary to place it underlyingly before *lākinna-* [i.e., **mā jā'anī 'amrun la-lākinna zaydan jā'anī*, like **la-'inna zaydan jā'anī* → '*inna zaydan la-jā'anī*—see above §1.2.2), in which case [the *lākinna*-clause] would be cut off from what is before it. As for the poet's saying

maintaining that they actually consist of two conjoined utterances (*fa-'inna ḥādā 'indahum yayru jā'izin 'illā min kalāmaynī*).

————— *wa-lākinnī min ḥubbiḥā*
la-kamīdū
 ————— ... but I am, on account of loving her,
la-sad

he only intended *wa-lākinna 'inn-anī min ḥubbiḥā la-kamīdu* '... but verily I am, on account of loving her, *la-sad*,' and introduced the *lām* into the *xabar* of 'inna. This is similar to the saying of God—may He be exalted!—*lākinnā huwa llāhu rabbī* (Q XVIII: 36/38) [lit.] 'but as for us, He is God, my Lord' according to the reading of those who read with the retention of the *ā*: the basis of this reading, according to all the scholars, is *lākin 'anā huwa llāhu rabbī* 'but as for 'me,' [i.e., with an anomalous use of the independent pronoun 'anā 'I' rather than the dependent pronoun -nī after the *lākin(na)*-] He is God, my Lord,' the glottal stop being lost through weakening and the first *nūn* joining with the second. The poet [does] similarly when he says *lākin 'innanī*, then elides the *hamza* [= the syllable 'i-]. The *nūn* of *lākin* remains, in its "lightened," vowelless form, followed by another vowelless letter—the normal alternative being to read it with an *i* [i.e., **lākin-i-nna*]-the elision [of the final -n] being allowable for *lākin* in poetry. [al-Zajjāji 176-178]

However one may choose to interpret *wa-lākinnī min ḥubbiḥā la-'amīdū/kamīdū*, it is worth noting that the verse may well be in a non-standard dialect, as may be seen from the plural marking of the verb *yalūmūnanī* (rather than **yalūmunī*) before the subject 'awāḍilī (i.e., a construction of the type 'akalūnī al-barāyīθ).

(d) After *mā* in the verse

| | |
|---|---|
| <i>'amsā 'abānū ṣalīlan ba'da 'izzatiḥī</i> | <i>wa-mā 'abānū la-min 'a'lāji sūdānī</i> |
| 'Abān has become contemptible | [see below] |
| where once he was powerful | |

The grammarians who seek instances of *lām al-ibtidā'* in such anomalous uses of *la-* point out that, if the *mā* in the second hemistich is taken to be the interrogative 'what,' the line may be parsed as containing a deleted *mubtada'* after the *la-*: *wa-mā 'abānū—la-(*huwa) min 'a'lāji sūdānī* 'And what is 'Abān? *la-(*He)* is a black lout' (cf. the reading of 'ummu l-ḥulaysi *la-(*hiya) 'ajūzun šahrabah* in §1.2.8(a)). An alternative interpretation, preferred by some, is to take the *mā* to be the *mā* of negation, which in this exceptional case has a *la-* marking its predicate¹⁰—'And 'Abān is not *la-a*

¹⁰ If the Kūfans are correct in claiming that *la-* may have the meaning of 'illā 'except' in conjunction with the negative 'in (see above under *al-lām al-fāriqa*, §1.2.3.), a third interpretation of the hemistich might be 'And 'Abān is only a black lout' (equivalent to **wa-mā 'abānū 'illā min 'a'lāji sūdānī*), with *mā* paralleling 'in.

black lout'—giving the verse a meaning opposite to what the other reading yields.

(e) In the *xabar* of the verb *zāla* 'cease' in the verse

| | |
|--|---|
| <i>wa-mā ziltu min laylā ladun 'an</i> | <i>la-ka-l-hā'imi l-muqṣā bikulli marādī</i> |
| <i>'araftuhā</i> | |
| And on account of Laylā I did not | <i>la</i> -like one bewildered, sent forth to |
| cease (being), from the moment I | roam everywhere. |
| knew her, | |

(f) Before the second direct object of *'arā* 'I regard' in sentences of the sort *'arā-ka la-ṣātimī* 'I regard you *la*-(as) my vilifier,' which some find acceptable (*fī qawl ba'ḍihim*).

(g) According to some interpretations prefixed to the indefinite relative pronoun *man* 'who' in the Qur'ānic verse XXII: 13, *yad'ū la-man ḡarruhu 'aqrabu min naḡ'ihi la-bi'sa l-mawlā wa-la-bi'sa l-'aṣīru* 'He calls *la*-one whose harm is likelier than his benefit, *la*-what an evil client, and *la*-what an evil companion,' although Ibn Hišām insists that this is another instance of the *lām al-ibtidā'*. Ibn Hišām's parsing of this line takes the *man* of the relative clause to be the *mubtada'* of a nominal clause whose *xabar*, *la-bi'sa l-mawlā* (**huwa*), contains an understood subject—'*la*-one whose harm is likelier than his benefit, *la*-what an evil client (*is he)...!'—although this raises the rather complicated question of the relation of the posited nominal clause to the preceding verb *yad'ū*. Ibn Hišām addresses this problem at some length without achieving a clear explanation, but he is nonetheless quite firm in maintaining that the assumption of a *lām al-zā'ida* in this passage is "...the most extreme irregularity, and such an exegesis of the Revelation is not becoming" (Ibn Hišām 258).

(h) Conditional constructions such as *la-'in qāma zaydun 'aqum* '*la*-if Zayd rises I will rise (with the jussive rather than the energetic)' or *la-'in qāma zaydun fa-'anā 'aqūmu* '*la*-if Zayd rises then I am rising (with a nominal clause)' or *'anta ḡālimun la-'in fa'alta* 'you are unjust *la*-if you do..., all of which lack the expected oath syntax in the apodosis and thus run counter to the typical *la-'in* sentence described above under *al-lām al-mawaffī'a*. Ibn Hišām claims that such constructions are peculiar (*xāṣṣ*) to poetry.

interpretation of the hemistich might be 'And 'Abān is only a black lout' (equivalent to **wa-mā 'abānu 'illā min 'a'lāji sūdāni*), with *mā* paralleling '*in*.

1.2.9 Ibn Hišām on *lām*: Conclusion

Of the five particles listed by Ibn Hišām (the *lām al-ibtidā'*, the *lām al-zā'ida*, the *lām al-jawāb*, the *lām al-muwaṭṭi'a*, and the *lām al-ta'ajjub ḡayr al-jārra*), one (the *lām al-ta'ajjub*) is rejected by Ibn Hišām as the product of an incorrect analysis (§1.2.7), while another (the *lām al-zā'ida*) is patently nothing more than a label for the miscellaneous examples which defied proper taxonomizing (§1.2.8). The remainder may be divided into the following types and subtypes:

1. The *lām* of the commencement (*lām al-ibtidā'*)
 - a. with the *mubtada'*, the initial substantive of a nominal sentence
 - b. with the particle '*inna*' (= *al-lām al-muzahliqa*)
(including *al-lām al-fāriqa*, which accompanies the lightened '*in*')
2. The *lām* of the apodosis (*lām al-jawāb*)
 - a. the *jawāb* of *law*
 - b. the *jawāb* of *lawlā*
 - c. the *jawāb* of the oath
3. The announcing *lām* (*al-lām al-mu'ḍina*), or the *lām* which paves the way
(*al-lām al-muwaṭṭi'a*)

1.3 The *Kitāb al-lāmāt* of Ibn Fāris

Although Ibn Hišām's may be "die ausführlichste Darstellung"¹¹ of the problem of the *lām*-particles, it is certainly not the only one. It is particularly noteworthy that Ibn Hišām himself does not recognize the *lām al-tawkīd* (or *ta'kīd*) ('*lām* of emphasis') frequently encountered in the discussions of other grammarians. The late Kūfan Ibn Fāris (d. 395/1004), for example, presents the following list of *la*-particles in his *Kitāb al-lāmāt*:

1. The *lām* with the meaning of emphasis (*al-lām bi-ma'nā l-ta'kīd*)
2. The *lām* attached to '*inna*' (*al-lām allatī tu'qib 'inna*)
3. The *lām* attached to the "light" '*in*' (*al-lām allatī tu'qib 'in al-xafīfa*)
4. The *lām* attached to the oath (*al-lām allatī tu'qib al-qasam*)
5. The *lām* attached to the condition (*al-lām allatī tu'qib al-šarṭ*)

As examples of type 1, the *lām* with the meaning of emphasis, Ibn Fāris cites the following Qur'ānic passages:

wa-la-qad 'arsalnā nūḥan (XI: 27/25) 'and *la*-We have sent Nūḥ...'

¹¹ In Bergsträsser's words (Ibn Fāris 80). Since Bergsträsser was writing before the publication of al-Zajjājī's *Kitāb al-lāmāt* (see below), however, it is possible that a more current assessment would reach another conclusion. Nevertheless, although the discussion of *lām* found in *Muṣnī al-labīb* is briefer than al-Zajjājī's *Kitāb al-lāmāt* (§1.4. below), the former is more systematically and comprehensively argued.

- wa-la-ni'ma dāru l-muttaqīna* (XVI: 32/30) 'and *la*-excellent indeed is the abode of the righteous'
- wa-la-sawfa yu'fikā rabbuka fa-tarqā* (XCIV/CXIII: 5) 'and your Lord *la*-will provide for you, and you will be satisfied'
- wa-la-qad kāna fī qīṣāṣihim 'ibratun* (XII: 111) 'and *la*-there was in their tales a warning...'
- wa-la-mani ntaṣara ba'da ḡulmihi...* (XLII: 39/41) 'and *la*-whoever defends himself after suffering wrong...'
- wa-la-man ṣabara wa-yaḡfara* (XLII: 41/43) 'and *la*-whoever shows patience and forgives...'
- wa-la-dāru l-'āxirati xayrun* (XII: 109) 'and *la*-the abode of the Next World is best...'
- wa-la-'amatun mu'minatun xayrun min mušrikatin wa-la-'abdun mu'minun xayrun min mušrikin* (II: 220/221) 'And *la*-a Muslim handmaiden is better than an unbelieving woman, and *la*-a Muslim slave is better than an unbeliever'

Of the eight passages which Ibn Fāris presents, four (II: 220/221, XLII: 39/41, 41/43, 109) would be classified by Ibn Hišām as instances of *lām al-ibtidā'*, and two (XI: 27/25, XII: 111) as the *lām* associated with a covert oath. In XVI: 32/30, Ibn Hišām would subsume the "*lām al-ta'ajjub*" either under the *lām al-ibtidā'* or the *lām* of the *jawāb* of an invisible oath, and we have already seen above (§1.2.1) some of the views on the question of XCIV/CXIII: 5 (*la-sawfa yu'fikā rabbuka...*): while Ibn al-Ḥājjib is reluctant to recognize an instance of *lām al-ibtidā'* in this verse, al-Zamāxšarī assumes an underlying *mubtada'* (**la-'anta sawfa yu'fikā rabbuka*) in order to make the passage amenable to such a parsing—an interpretation of which Ibn Hišām in principle approves, although he grants that he is troubled that the resulting reading runs counter to the generalization that *lām al-ibtidā'* is restricted to the present tense. Interestingly, although both Ibn al-Ḥājjib and Ibn Fāris classify the *la-* of XCIV/CXIII: 5 as a "*lām* of emphasis," they clearly have different understandings of what this means, since Ibn al-Ḥājjib's *lām al-tawkīd* is distinct from and opposed to a *lām al-ibtidā'*, whereas Ibn Fāris's system lacks *lām al-ibtidā'* altogether.

Ibn Fāris asserts that the purpose of the *lām* of emphasis is the "emphasizing and affirming (*al-tawkīd wa-l-taḡbīt*) of the thing" (Ibn Fāris/Bergsträsser 1924: 81). He insists quite firmly that the *lām* of emphasis is distinct from the *lām* of the oath.

... People have maintained that these *lāmāt* are a *lām* of the oath, since the oath appears in the utterance for emphasizing and strengthening and affirming. 'Abū l-Ḥusayn—God make him happy!—has said, "And if these *lāmāt* were the *lām* of the oath, then anyone, when he said *la-zaydun*

'akramu min 'amrin 'la-Zayd (is) nobler than 'Amr,' would be swearing an oath, and he would be an oath-breaker if Zayd did not turn out to be nobler than 'Amr." The *lām* is therefore not the *lām* of the oath but only the *lām* of emphasis, as we have explained... [Ibn Fāris/Bergsträsser 1924: 82]

As we may see from cases such as *la-qad 'arsalnā...*, the *lām* of the oath, for Ibn Fāris, is much more restricted than the corresponding *lām* in Ibn Hišām's system: under the heading *al-lām allatī tu'qibu al-qasam* in the *Kitāb al-lāmāt*, Ibn Fāris cites instances of *la-* only in conjunction with the energetic verb. The underlying oath, which is so critical for Ibn Hišām's understanding of the conditional construction *la-'in*, is not mentioned in the brief discussion of the *lām allatī tu'qibu al-šarṭ*, while the constructions with *law* and *lawlā* are entirely absent from the *Kitāb al-lāmāt*. In contrast, the *lām* associated with the particle 'inna, which Ibn Hišām regards as a manifestation of the *lām al-ibtidā'*, is promoted to independent status alongside the *lām* of emphasis, as is the *lām* accompanying 'in, the shortened form of 'inna.

Ibn Fāris's taxonomical model, peremptory though it may be, has at least the advantage of freeing its deviser from some of the more vexing issues which troubled Ibn Hišām and his fellow grammarians. As we have seen above, these faced their most complex dilemmas in delineating the boundary separating the *lām al-ibtidā'* from the *lām* of the *jawāb* of the oath. Confronting this problem led them to the positing of innumerable invisible *mubtada'*s, oath-clauses, and similar abstract entities. Ibn Fāris obviates the entire debate by removing altogether the boundary dividing the two *la-*particles, resulting in the creation of a single emphatic "super-particle" covering virtually all of the functions of the core of Ibn Hišām's intricately articulated machinery. He does this at considerable cost, however, since he thereby eliminates any possibility of constraining the employment of *la-*, in essence moving the default function of the particle into the heart of the system: since his emphatic *la-* is virtually unprincipled, he is incapable of identifying, as Ibn Hišām does, the anomalous cases in which *la-* is found counter to expectation. Perhaps even more important than Ibn Fāris's collapsing of the *lām al-ibtidā'* and the *lām al-jawāb* is thus his erasing of the boundaries of the *lām al-zā'ida*.

The view of *la-* which Ibn Fāris presents in his *Kitāb al-lāmāt* is conspicuously different from his treatment of the same material in his more well-known *al-Sāhibī fī fiqh al-luḡa*. Here Ibn Fāris mentions the term "*lām al-ibtidā'*" (albeit only as a synonym of *lām al-tawkīd*), and subordinates the *lām* of 'inna to this *la-* of emphasis/commencement. The *lām al-tawkīd* cum *lām al-ibtidā'* in turn is opposed simply to a *lām* of the oath. Rather remarkably, in light of the absence of a *lām al-zā'ida* in the *Kitāb al-lāmāt*, he alludes briefly to the poetic verse 'ummu l-ḥulaysi *la-*

'*ajūzun šahrabah* 'Umm al-Ḥulays *la-*(is) an old woman, a *šahraba*,' with its puzzling employment of *la-* in the *xabar* of a nominal sentence (mentioned above in the discussion of Ibn Hišām's *al-lām al-zā'ida*, §1.2.1, §1.2.8(a)); indeed, the term *zā'idatan* actually appears in connection with the brief discussion of this verse in one manuscript of the *Sāhibī* (Ibn Fāris 1977: 146-147). The overall impression gained by a comparison of the various analyses of *la-* found in the *Kitāb al-lāmāt* and in the *Sāhibī* is that the latter contains a much more mainstream "Baṣran" account of the facts. Bergsträsser regards the *Kitāb al-lāmāt* as a later work incorporating the results of Ibn Fāris's attempt to examine the views of both grammatical schools critically (Ibn Fāris/Bergsträsser 1924: 96-99); it is to be regretted that his account is so terse that it provides very little information about the reasoning which he employed to reach his conclusions.

1.4 The *Kitāb al-lāmāt* of al-Zajjājī

Another interesting alternative to Ibn Hišām's taxonomy of *la-* may be found in a summarizing chapter (*Bāb ma'rīfat 'uṣūl hāḍihi al-lāmāt...*) of the *Kitāb al-lāmāt* of al-Zajjājī (d. ca. 337-949). Here the various types of *la-* discussed in the main body of al-Zajjājī's work are broken down into three major categories, the *lām* of emphasis (*lām al-tawkīd*), the *lām* of the *jawāb* (*lām al-jawāb*), and the distinguishing *lām* (*lām al-faṣl*). Each of these in turn is subdivided as shown in Table 5 below.

Although al-Zajjājī does not explicitly state the criteria upon which he bases this breakdown, it appears that an important characteristic setting apart the *lām al-tawkīd* is the fact that its presence is optional. Note the following observations which he makes on the nature of the *lām* of 'inna in response to the question, "But if it is an emphasizer for the *xabar*, why is it acceptable for it both to be present and not to be present? Would it not be obligatory?" [al-Zajjājī 62].

As for the possibility for this *lām* both to be either present in the *xabar* or absent, according to the view of Sibawayh and the Baṣrans this is only allowable because it is an addition made under emphasis and intensifies the affirmativeness of 'inna (*ziyādatun fī l-tawkīdi wa-muṣaddidatun taḥqīqa 'inna*), and it is acceptable that what is added under emphasis be brought in, and it is acceptable that it not be brought in. When it is brought in it is more intense in emphasis and more rhetorically effective ('*aṣadda li-l-tawkīdi wa-'ablāya*), and when it is not brought in there is sufficiency in the 'inna alone... [al-Zajjājī 65]

Table 5: Al-Zajjājī's taxonomy of *la-*

| Lām al-tawkid ^a | Lām al-jawāb | Lām al-ḥaṣl ^b |
|---|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •The <i>la-</i> of the oath (<i>lām al-qasam</i>)^c •The <i>la-</i> of 'inna (<i>lām 'inna</i>) •The <i>la-</i> of the commencement (<i>lām al-ibtidā'</i>) •The <i>la-</i> required by the future verb in the affirmative oath (<i>al-lāzima li-l-fi'l al-mustaqbal fī l-'ijāb fī l-qasam</i>) •The <i>la-</i> of the conditional (<i>lām al-ṣarṭ</i>)^d | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •The <i>la-</i> of law (<i>lām law</i>) •The <i>la-</i> of lawlā (<i>lām lawlā</i>) •The <i>la-</i> of the apodosis of the oath (<i>lām jawāb al-qasam</i>) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •The <i>la-</i> required by lightened 'in (<i>allatī talzamu 'in al-maksūra al-muxaffafa min al-ḥaṣila</i>) •The <i>la-</i> of affirmation in the oath (<i>lām al-'ijāb fī l-qasam</i>) |

- a. The subclassification of *lām al-tawkid* given here is a summation of two lists enumerated by al-Zajjājī: ... *fa-'innahā tajma'u lāma l-qasami wa-lāma l-ibtidā' wa-l-lāma l-lāzimata li-l-fi'li l-mustaqbali fī l-mūjabī fī l-qasami* '... and it encompasses the *lām* of the oath and the *lām* of 'inna and the *lām* of the commencement and the *lām* required by the future verb in the affirmative in the oath' (p. 164) and '*ammā lāmu l-tawkidī fa-'innahā mu'akkidatun li-mā daxalat 'alayhi wa-kaḍālika lāmu l-ibtidā'i li-l-tawkidī wa-lāmu 'inna li-l-tawkidī wa-lāmu l-ṣarṭi li-l-tawkidī wa-lāmu l-qasami li-l-tawkidī wa-kaḍālika sā'iru mā yata'allaqu bihā* 'As for the *lām* of emphasis, verily it is an emphazier for that with which it occurs—thus the *lām* of the commencement is for emphasis, and the *lām* of 'inna is for emphasis, and the *lām* of the conditional is for emphasis, and the *lām* of the oath is for emphasis, and similarly the remainder of what depends therefrom' (p. 165). Note the presence in the first list of 'the *lām* necessary for the future verb in the affirmative in the oath,' and in the second list of the *lām* of the conditional.
- b. Al-Zajjājī has not mentioned the third type of *la-*, the *lām al-ḥaṣl*, prior to this point in the *Kitāb al-lāmāt*.
- c. It is not clear how to interpret *lām al-qasam* here. It is presumably distinct from the *lām* of the *jawāb* of the oath, since the latter is listed under *lām al-jawāb*. It is most likely that he refers here to the *la-* found in oath clauses such as *la-'amruka*... 'By your life...!' In the body of the text, however, he describes the *la-* of such oaths as an instance of *lām al-ibtidā'*, the underlying structure of the clause being (for him as for others) **la-'amruka mā 'uqsimu bihi*... '**la-your life is what I swear by*...'
- d. Al-Zajjājī uses this term to cover two distinct particles, the *la-* associated with the conditional particle 'in (i.e., Ibn Hišām's *al-lām al-muwaffi'a*, §1.2.6) and the particle *l(i)-*, the *lām al-'amr* '*lām* of the command' or jussive *lām*, when it occurs in an apodosis-like clause following an imperative such as *ittabi'ū sabīlanā wa-l-naḥmil xaṭāyākum* 'follow our road, and we shall take up your transgressions' (XXIX: 11/12). Under the heading of the *lām* of emphasis al-Zajjājī has the former *lām al-ṣarṭ* in mind (pp. 159-160).

In contrast, al-Zajjājī describes the three types of *lām al-jawāb* (i.e., the *lāmāt* of the *jawābāt* of *law*, *lawlā*, and the oath) as obligatory.¹² Each is an integral part of its syntagm, linked in an unbreakable bond with its partner (viz. the conditional clause or performative oath-clause). Strictly speaking, we therefore cannot speak of the *la-* of such constructions lending “emphasis” to its sentence in the same way that the *la-* associated with *’inna* contributes to its clause. Whatever meaning *la-* may have resides in the meaning of the “conditional/oath + *jawāb*” complex as a whole; if there is any “emphaticness” or “intensity” to be found in such sentences, it is to be sought in the totality of the syntactic structure, and not simply in the presence of the *la*-particle.

The obligatoriness of the *lām al-jawāb* is thus in marked contrast to the obligatoriness of the *lām al-faṣl*. In the case of the latter, the *la-* is held to be not redundant but crucially significant, serving to convey distinctions which would be unconveyed otherwise. Indeed, as we have seen above, each of the two subtypes of the *lām al-faṣl* is described as occupying a crucial distinctive position within a morphosyntactic paradigmatic opposition.

If someone says [concerning the *lām* occurring with the energetic verb in the oath], “But why are the *lām* and the *nūn* [of the energetic verb ending] both necessary? Is it not acceptable to restrict oneself to one of them, since they are both for emphasis?” The answer to this is that al-Xalīl and Sībawayh and al-Farrā’ and al-Kisā’ī agree that the *lām* and the *nūn* can only co-occur here because the *lām* appears in order to make affirmative that which is sworn, just as *lā* appears in the negative when you say *wa-llāhi lā yaqūmu zaydun* ‘By God, Zayd will not rise!’ while the *nūn* is necessary at the end of the verb to distinguish between the present verb and the future verb, being the indicator of the future. So when you say *wa-llāhi la-yaxrujanna zaydun* ‘By God, *la*-Zayd will surely go out!’ the *lām* indicates the affirmativeness and the *nūn* the futurity and the exclusion of the verb from the present; each of them indicates a single meaning... [al-Zajjājī 114]

... [The lightened *’in*] requires the *lām* in the *xabar*, and the elision of the *lām* in the *xabar* is not allowable, lest it resemble the negating [*’in*]. Do you not see that, were you to say *’in zaydun qā’imun* ‘*’in Zayd is standing’ meaning the affirmative, there would be no distinction between this and the negative? The *lām* is therefore required in the *xabar*. When you use the heavy *’inna* you have the option (*kunta muxayyan*) of

¹² At the underlying level, at least. Al-Zajjājī grants that in the *jawāb* of *law* and the *jawāb* of the oath the *la-* is occasionally suppressed (*’uḍmirat*), particularly in poetry. He nonetheless regards it as present at a deeper level, and its existence to be assumed (*muqaddara*).

introducing *lām* into the *xabar* or omitting it, as when you say '*inna zaydan la-qā'imun* and '*inna zaydan qā'imun* 'Verily Zayd (*la-*) is standing,' the potential confusion having disappeared. This is because, when it is heavy, it does not have the meaning of the negative. So understand this... [al-Zajjājī 118]

If this interpretation of al-Zajjājī's taxonomy is correct, we find that each of his three major types of *la-* plays a different role in its sentence, corresponding to two separate but closely interacting features: (a) the degree of freedom of occurrence which it enjoys, and (b) its level of communicative value. He thus distinguishes between the *la-* which constitutes the meaning of its sentence (*lām al-faʿl*), the *la-* which contributes to the meaning of its sentence (*lām al-tawkīd*), and the *la-* which is redundantly present in its sentence (*lām al-jawāb*).

| Obligatory | | Optional |
|---------------------|--------------------------|----------------------|
| <i>Lām al-jawāb</i> | <i>Lām al-faʿl</i> | <i>Lām al-tawkīd</i> |
| Functionally Ø | Functionally significant | |

It may be noted that al-Zajjājī's system has a measure of ambiguity built into it, since a given *la-* may in principle be analyzed at different levels: al-Zajjājī's interpretation of the *lām* associated with the energetic verb as *lām al-faʿl* thus overlooks the fact that it is at the same time an instance of *lām jawāb al-qasam*, and consequently it simultaneously occupies another slot elsewhere in the system. Nevertheless, we find implicit in al-Zajjājī's presentation a highly sophisticated taxonomy based upon a keen appreciation for functional concerns, despite the fact that his presentation is more ambiguous and less detailed than Ibn Hišām's syntactically motivated model.

1.5 Conclusion

We find, in short, that the classical Arabic grammarians were able to design a number of taxonomies of the occurrences of *la-*, each of which, in principle, exhaustively encompassed all of the attestations of the particle with which they were confronted. In certain respects, of course, each of these taxonomies admitted to a certain amount of "leakage": Ibn Hišām's *al-lām al-zā'ida*, for example, can hardly be regarded as anything other than a catch-all for the occurrences of *la-* which defy accommodation into any of his better-defined categories. Similarly, as we have seen, it is clear that none of the taxonomical models for *la-* acquired universal recognition as the only true and proper one. Those students of grammar who devoted special attention to the question of *la-* had ultimately to acknowledge that a great deal about this particle remained open to doubt and debate.

The intellectual ingenuity which went into the investigation of *la-* merits admiration. From another point of view, however, it might be said that one of the most important achievements of the grammarians' work on *la-* results from interpreting their conclusions in a manner quite different from their own. The compendious cataloguing to which they subjected their material makes clear the fact that their taxonomies were intended to work in such a way as to allow for no syntactic environment in which two different types of *lām* occur. This was, of course, an obvious principle motivating them throughout their discussions of this problem. While there is no shortage of debate among the grammarians as to how to interpret a given instance of *la-* in terms of one taxonomic model or another, these debates invariably took the form of attempting to refine the criteria upon which the various *lāmāt* were classified. While al-Zamaxšarī might assert that the *lām* of *wa-la-sawfa yu'ṭika rabbuka* (XCIV/CXIII: 5) is to be interpreted as *lām al-ibtidā'* and Ibn al-Ḥājjib might counter that it must be some other type of *lām*, the indecision about the parsing of the passage takes the form of a discussion of the proper identification of the syntactic environment. Once the grammarian has settled upon the proper characterization of the environment—whether that characterization focus on the level of the surface of the sentence or on some more abstract level—his taxonomy allows him to reach an identification of the *lām* more or less automatically. In cases where the environment remains a matter of debate, the nature of the *lām* typically does as well.

It is noteworthy that there is no environment, even for the most abstruse and problematical occurrences of *la-*, in which the grammarians admitted that more than one *lām* might be found. Consequently, at no point in any given grammatical analysis is any type of *la-* in opposition with another type. This leads us to view the grammarians' activities with respect to *la-* from a somewhat different perspective: in the absence of an opposition, we have every reason to believe that we are not in the presence of an array of discrete, isolatable entities but have rather a single element.

This point of view did not escape the attention of the grammarians. Time after time we have found them proposing that the full battery of *la*'s may be simplified by demonstrating that *lām* X is to be subordinated to *lām* Y—e.g., that the *lām* of *'inna* is a subset of the *lām* of the commencement (cf. Ibn Hišām and the Baṣrans in §1.2.2 above), or that the *lām* of the oath falls under the *lām* of the commencement, as Ibn Ya'īš maintains.

... We say that its source is the *ibtidā'* because it may sometimes be deprived of the sense of the *jawāb* while retaining that of the *ibtidā'*, but it is never deprived of the *ibtidā'*. This is therefore the more specific of its two senses. Hence you say *la-'amruka la-'aqūmanna 'la-* Your life, *la-* I shall

surely rise!’ and *la-‘amru llāhi mā nadrī* ‘*la*-God’s life, we do not know!’ Do you not see that here it is specifically for the *ibtidā*’, because the sense of the *jawāb* cannot be correct here, it being impossible for an oath to be followed by another oath?¹³ [Ibn Ya’īš 21]

Indeed, certain scholars have gone so far as to collapse all the instances of *la-* under the general rubric of “*lām* of emphasis.” Al-Jawharī in his *al-Sihāh*, for example, observes quite tersely,

... As for the *lām* of emphasis, [it is] of five types. Among them is the *lām al-ibtidā*’, such as when you say *la-zaydun ‘afḍalu min ‘amrin* ‘*la*-Zayd (is) better than ‘Amr.’ And among them is the one which appears in the *xabar* of ‘inna (both geminated and lightened).... And among them is the one which appears for the *jawāb* of *law* and *lawlā*.... And among them is the one which appears with the future verb rendered emphatic by the energetic *nūn*.... And among them is the *lām* of the *jawāb* of the oath.... [al-Jawharī 2,035]

This “unified” approach to *la-* is more typical of the lexicographers than of the grammarians. This is not surprising, given the nature of the task which each group was undertaking: the lexicographer was concerned with providing a framework enabling his reader to parse the instances of *la-* which might be encountered in reading older texts, particularly in the often esoteric and linguistically problematical realm of poetry. Within the corpus of the ancient Arabs’ poetic legacy, the primary yardstick employed by the grammarians—the distinguishing between acceptable usage, unacceptable usage, and usage attested but not to be used as a model—was not relevant. The grammarians were concerned with the codification of the principles of a pristine grammatical system still felt to lie at the heart of the contemporary language (albeit frequently obscured in the latter by the general effects of decay), and consequently required an understanding of where *la-* could be used and where it could not. The result of the search for such an understanding, as we have seen, was typically a more or less complex network of *la*-particles, each with its own restrictions on attestation. In summarizing the problem of *la-*, as well as all the other *l*-particles to be found in the language, al-Zajjājī notes,

... And were it not for the difference in the positions of these *lāmāt*, and the distinctness of their government effects, and their causes and circumstances, one might say that all the *lāmāt* are derived from two sorts

¹³ I.e., the *la-* of *la-‘amruka* and *la-‘amru llāhi*, although serving as a *lām* of the oath, is taxonomically a *lām* of the commencement; it cannot be the *jawāb* of an implicit preceding oath-clause (e.g., *‘*uqsimu billāhi*) *la-‘amruka* (*mā ‘uqsimu bihi*) *la-‘aqūmanna* *(I swear by God), *la*-your life (is what I swear by) *la*-I shall surely rise!’ since an oath can only have the asseverated statement as its *jawāb*, and cannot take another oath-clause in this position.

of *lām*: a radical *lām* [*lām* 'aṣliyya, i.e., / employed in the roots of lexical items] and a supplementary *lām* [*lām* zā'ida]. And indeed, by my life, all of them go back to these two sorts of *lām*... [al-Zajjājī 166]

Although the grammarians granted at times that the justification for this array of discrete particles—the meanings of which were but dimly understood, but which all seemed ultimately to be some form of “emphaticness”—may not have been compelling, they considered this model preferable to a “lexicographical” approach providing no means of distinguishing between where *la-* could be used and where it was unallowable. The grammarians’ task was complicated by their assumption of a unified, homogeneous grammatical system lying behind the language of the ancient poets, the language of the Qur’ān and the Traditions, the language of the nomadic Arabs, and the language of the classical grammarians. Although in very many cases there was a consensus across the various sources of information available to the grammarians, the issue of *la-* was not such a case, and it was consequently necessary to devise a descriptive apparatus simultaneously rigorous and flexible enough to deal with data ranging from a pre-Islamic *hapax legomenon* to the theorizing of an Abbasid academic.

The nature of the Arabic asseverative particle *la-* remains in many respects open to debate. Certain of the questions surrounding the function of *la-* and the various particles and environments with which it is associated will be addressed in Chapter Two. In subsequent chapters we shall consider a number of particles in related Semitic languages which share formal and functional features with Arabic *la-*. All of these elements are believed to have descended from a particle which existed in the original Proto-Semitic language. The shape and significance of this ancestral particle may be reconstructed through comparison of its descendants in the various historical Semitic languages.

CHAPTER TWO

ON THE POSITION OF *la-* IN THE STRUCTURE OF ARABIC

2.1 *Introduction*

However invaluable and ingenious their insights may be, it must be borne in mind that the objectives toward which the ancient grammarians were striving were very different from those of a twentieth-century linguist. In the following pages, the grammatical role of the early Arabic particle *la-* will be addressed from the perspective of its function within the structure of that language. In many senses, the final product of this analysis will be conspicuously reminiscent of those of the medieval grammarians, as it will be crucially dependent both upon their data and upon their interpretations of the data. At the same time, we find that there are certain details of the behavior of *la-* (particularly in the area of the location of the particle within the simple clause) for which the key to interpretation lies in comparative Semitic evidence which was unavailable to the older grammarians. Moreover, we find that general linguistic research provides useful parallels to the phenomena which we find in Arabic.

One important question about the behavior of *la-* lies at the core of its function: is the scope of the “emphasis” which *la-* exercises (however the term “emphasis” is to be understood) the entire utterance, or is this emphasis concentrated upon a specific element within the utterance? The latter perspective on this question has been taken to be the correct one, both by certain of the ancient grammarians and by more recent researchers.¹

In order to facilitate the investigation of *la-*, we shall first look at two of the elements which, as we have seen in Chapter One, are very closely associated with *la-*. Besides constituting objects well worth studying in their own right, both *'inna* and *qad* provide valuable information on *la-* and its role in the grammar of early Arabic.

2.2.1.1 *Arabic 'inna*

In general it has been said that the Arabic particle *'inna* functions as an emphasizer which is to be translated as ‘verily’ or ‘indeed.’ *'Inna* (as

¹ Cf. al-Zajjāji—“the *lām* occurs in the *xabar* to emphasize it, just as *'inna* occurs to emphasize the sentence... This is the view of Sibawayh” (p. 60). Compare also Kinberg (1985), who interprets *la-* as a discourse marker focusing upon the “comment” of its sentence.

opposed to its “lightened” (*muxaffafa*) manifestation *'in* is associated exclusively with nominal clauses (i.e., clauses with a nominal *mubtada'* or topic). The *ism 'inna* (the noun phrase governed by *'inna*) is normally in clause-initial position (e.g., *'inna zaydan fī l-bayti* ‘*'inna* Zayd (is) in the house,’ *'inna zaydan kataba kitāban* ‘*'inna* Zayd wrote a book,’ *'inna zaydan qaraba-hu 'abūhu* ‘*'inna* Zayd—his father struck him’) but, if the *xabar* is a prepositional phrase, the *ism 'inna* (particularly if it is indefinite) may be shifted into a “focus” position at the end of the clause (*'inna fī l-bayti mra'atan* ‘*'inna* in the house (there is) a woman’).

The noun serving as the *ism 'inna* appears in the accusative or, if it is a pronominal, in the suffixed form which is employed elsewhere as the pronominal counterpart to the accusative.

| | Singular | Dual | Plural |
|---------|-------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------|
| 1 | <i>'inna-nī, 'in-nī</i> | <i>'inna-nā, 'in-nā</i> | |
| 2 masc. | <i>'inna-ka</i> | <i>'inna-kumā</i> (m., f.) | <i>'inna-kum</i> |
| 2 fem. | <i>'inna-ki</i> | | <i>'inna-kunna</i> |
| 3 masc. | <i>'inna-hū</i> | <i>'inna-humā</i> (m., f.) | <i>'inna-hum</i> |
| 3 fem. | <i>'inna-hā</i> | | <i>'inna-hunna</i> |

Table 6: Paradigm of Arabic *inna*

According to the normal grammatical rules, a predicate noun or an adjective serving as the *xabar* of the *'inna*-clause stands in the nominative, as it would in a nominal clause without *'inna*—thus *'inna zaydan karīmun* ‘*'inna* Zayd^{acc} (is) noble^{nom},’ with nominative *karīmun* as in simple *zaydun karīmun* ‘Zayd^{nom} (is) noble^{nom}’). However, sporadic counterexamples to this generalization containing a *xabar* in the accusative are encountered in early texts.

'idā štadda junhu l-layli fa-l-ta'ti
wa-l-yakun

‘when the early portion of the
night has become intense may
you come,

xuṭāka xifāfan 'inna hurrāsānā
'usdā

and may your step be light—*'inna*
our guards are lions (acc.
'usdā)²

'inna qa'ra jahannama sab'īna xarīfan ‘*'inna* the bottom of hell is seventy
(acc.) years’³

² Cited by Lane (s.v. *'inna*), quoting Ibn Hišām.

³ I.e., “it takes seventy years to reach the bottom.” Cited thus by Lane as a Tradition, but the concordance of Winesick gives only ... *la-sab'ūna xarīfan* in Muslim b. al-Hajjāj's chapter on 'Imān.

The clause containing *'inna* may be either independent or subordinated. As we saw above in Chapter One, *'inna* was regarded as one of the markers of the apodosis of the oath (*jawāb al-qasam*). An independent clause beginning with *'inna* was thus frequently interpreted by the grammarians as containing an underlying oath, and therefore, in a sense, as virtually subordinated (i.e., *'inna zaydan karīmun* is underlyingly **wallāhi 'inna zaydan karīmun* '(By God,) *'inna* Zayd (is) noble!').⁴

We also find the particle *'inna* used systematically with forms of the verb *qāla* 'say' to introduce a quotation.

qāla llāhu 'innī munazziluhā 'alaykum (V: 115) 'God said: *'inna*-I (-nī) (am) sending it down to you'

wa-qawlihīm 'innā qatalnā l-masīha (IV: 156) '... and their saying: *'inna*-we (-nā) killed the Messiah.'

As we have seen in Chapter One, the grammarians state that *'inna* may also be used in the place of *'anna* 'that' in a clause serving as the object of a *fi'l al-qalb* (a verb of knowledge or perception). When *'inna* is used in such a construction, the particle *la-* was said to be obligatory in the *xabar* of the lower clause.

wa-llāhu ya'lamu 'innaka la-rasūluhu (LXIII: 1) 'And God knows that you (*'inna*-ka) *la*-(are) His apostle.'

'Inna (as well as *'anna*) may be used after the particle *'idā* 'behold!' which indicates unexpectedness (*al-fujā'iyya*)—*xarajtu fa-'idā 'inna zaydan qā'imun* 'I went out and behold! Zayd (was) standing.' Similarly, *'inna* may be found in a nominal clause marked with the conjunction *wa-* which serves as a circumstantial clause (*ḥāl*)—*jā'a zaydun wa-'inna yadahu 'alā ra'sihi* 'Zayd came, his hand on his head' (lit. '... and *'inna* his hand (is) on his head'). Other contexts in which *'inna* appears include the apodosis of the conditional clause—e.g., *wa-la-'in 'aṭa'tum bašaran miṭlakum 'innakum 'iḍan la-xāsirūna* (XXIII: 34) 'and *la*-if you submit to a human being like yourselves *'inna*-you (are) then *la*-losers.'

2.2.1.2 Hebrew *hinne*^h

The Hebrew particle *hinne*^h has long been recognized as the functional counterpart to Arabic *'inna*, and it has been widely held to be a formal cognate to *'inna* as well. Like *'inna*, the presentative particle *hinne*^h

⁴ Al-Kisā'ī (quoted by Lane, s.v. *'inna*), however, mentions that, in the absence of the particle *la-*, the oath could take the particle *'anna* 'that' rather than *'inna* in the speech of "some of the Arabs" (*wallāhi 'annaka qā'imun* 'By God, that you (are) standing!').

frequently takes a pronominal suffix, although it differs from *'inna* in that it is occasionally found followed by an independent pronoun rather than a suffix (i.e., *hinne^h* 'ānokî alongside *hinnənî* = Arabic *'in(na)nī*). *Hinne^h* is typically (although not invariably) followed by a clause, but differs from *'inna* in that this clause begins as frequently with a verb as it does with a substantive. It may be noted that there is also a shortened form of *hinne^h*, *hen*, which is (superficially at least) comparable to *'in*, the “lightened” (*muxaffafa*) counterpart to Arabic *'inna*.⁵

hinənî nišbā'tî bi-šmî haggâḏôl 'āmar YHWH (Jeremiah 44: 26) “‘*hinne^h*-me I-swear by my great name,” said YHWH’

wəhinne^h-hâ' wəhâ'ām 'āšer-ittô yošə'im 'ele'kâ (Judges 9: 33) ‘and *hinne^h*-he and the people who are with him (are) coming against you...’ (circumstantial clause)

hinne^h hāmîk 'ole' timnâtâ (Genesis 38: 13) ‘*hinne^h* your father-in-law (is) going up to Timna.’

wə-hinne^h nātān yādô (Ezekiel 17: 18) ‘... and *hinne^h* (he) has given his hand...’ (circumstantial clause)

2.2.1.3 Ugaritic particles akin to *'inna*

Ugaritic shows clear traces of a particle corresponding to Hebrew *hinne^h*/*hen*. In passages such as the following, Ugaritic *hn* evidently exercises some form of emphatic force within the clause to which it is prefixed (Aartun 1974: 68f).

w.hn.ibm. šq.ly (1012:27) ‘and *hn* the enemy presses on me’

phn.āhym.ytn.b'l spūy (49:VI:10-1) ‘and-*hn* my brother gave me B'l to eat’

whn.āttn.tšhn.y.mt.mt (52.46) ‘and-*hn* the two women cry out, “O Mt, Mt”

hn.špthm.mtqtm... (52:50) ‘*hn* their lips are sweet’

The particle *hn* is also found setting off a noun phrase from its clause.

⁵ As Lambdin (1971a: 169-170) notes, “Most *hinnēh*-clauses occur in direct speech... and serve to introduce a fact upon which a following statement or command is based...” (cf. *hinne^h* 'attâ zâqântâ... 'attâ šmâ-lânû mēlek (I Samuel 8:5) ‘*hinne^h* you have grown old... Now set a king over us’). The syntax of Hebrew *hinne^h* differs from that of Arabic *'inna* in that it is frequently followed by a simple noun phrase rather than by a complete clause (in which case, according to Waltke and O'Connor (1990: 676), *hinne^h* serves “as a bridge to introduce with emotion [the] noun clause... or perception, either after a verb of perception... or after a new situation of perception is described...” —cf. Genesis 22: 7 *hinne^h hā'eš wəhā'ešim wə'ayye^h hašše^h la'olâ 'hinne^h* the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for sacrifice?) and also in that it may be followed by a bare predicate with no explicit subject (cf. I Samuel 30: 3 *wayyābo' dāwid wa'ānāšāw 'el-hā'ir wəhinne^h šarûpâ bā'eš* ‘And David and his men came to the city and *hinne^h* (it had been) burned with fire.’

ytšī ldr bn il ltkmn [w]šnm hn 'r (2:25-26) 'es steige empor zum Geschlecht der Söhne des Il, zu Tkmn [und] Šnm, siehe (*hn*), der Esel!'
tmgyy hn ālpm sswm hnd (1012:31-32) 'sie sollen dahinkommen, siehe (*hn*), diese 2000 Pferde'

The particles *hm* and *ht*, which function similarly to *hn*, presumably represent suffixed forms of *hn* (**hn-m*, **hn-t*) in which the *-n* has assimilated. These too may mark either an entire clause or a noun phrase.

mlk [t]r ābh yārš hm drk[t] kâb ādm (Krt:41-43) 'begehrt er die Herrschaft des [Stie]res, seines Vaters, siehe, die Mach[t] gleich der des Vaters der Menschheit?'
hm b'p nt'n bārš iby (76:II:23-24) 'siehe, im Flug stiessen wir zur Erde meine Feinde/meinen Feind'
ht ibk b'lm ht ibk tmḥs ht tšmt šrtk (68:8-9) 'siehe, deinen Feind, o Ba'l, siehe, deinen Feind wirst du schlagen, siehe deinen Gegner wirst du vernichten'
tšmḥ ht ātrt wbnh (49:I:11-12) 'es freuen sich, siehe, Atrt und ihre Söhne!'

2.2.1.4 Phoenician/Punic traces

A trace of a cognate to '*inna/hinne*' is to be found also in archaic Byblian *hn*, found in a graffito on the sarcophagus of Ahirom (KAI 2) (Donner and Röllig 1971: 4-5).

ld't hn ypd lk tḥt zn 'Achtung! Siehe, es findet sich darunter Unglück für dich!'

Later, in Punic, the same particle is found written as '*n*' (Van den Branden 1969: 123-124).

w'n' šm'tm 'et voici leurs noms'

Moreover, this particle seems to appear in a Punic passage in Latin transcription preserved by Plautus (*Poenulus*). Here the form *inncho* (line 936) evidently represents 'behold, here he is!' while *ynnyynu* (line 939, probably to be read **ynnyyny*) is presumably 'here I am!' (Friedrich and Röllig 1970: 131).

2.2.1.5 Aramaic traces

In contrast to the abundant material from elsewhere in Northwest Semitic, only a few clear examples of an early Aramaic counterpart to this particle have been identified. In part this may be because it is often difficult to distinguish between the particle meaning 'behold' and the particle meaning 'if'. Segert (1975) cites one of the Aramaic documents from Tell el-Halaf (I v 4) as containing a clear instance of *hn* used as a presentation element.

hn lh ntn š'ry' '... siehe, (ist) für ihn der Lieferant der Gerste...' (Friedrich 1967: 71-73)

Another possible instance of *hn* may be found in the Hadad inscription of Zincirli, although the reading is uncertain (Tropper 1993: 91).

h(?)n*!'*. 'n* šmt '*mrt. 'l. bpm. zr. (Hadad 29-30) 'Siehe(?), ich habe diese Worte/diesen Auftrag gewiß nicht in den Mund eines Fremden/Feindes gelegt!'

2.2.1.6 Northwest Semitic particles from the second millennium

In addition to instances of direct attestation such as those indicated above, we also find indirect information indicating the existence of one or more Northwest Semitic counterparts to Arabic *'in(na)*. Certain of the second-millennium documents from the West Semitic area, although written in Akkadian, show systematic divergences from canonical Akkadian which have been ascribed to the influence of the native Northwest Semitic languages of the scribes who wrote them. Huehnergard (1989: 196-197) observes that in Akkadian texts from Ugarit the subordinating conjunction *enūma/inūma* 'that, when' appears to have become confused with *anumma*, "a sentence-modifying adverb that introduces a new thought" (1989: 195). This may be seen in examples such as the following, in which the function of *enūma/inūma* diverges from its normal Akkadian role (Huehnergard 1989: 197):

e-nu-ma it-ia šulmu (Ug. 5 54:6,24) 'now then, with me is well-being'

i-nu-ma nakir PN tupšarru⁶ itti šarri bēlišu u PN₂ idūkšu (PRU 3 68f:7-9)
'now then, PN the scribe was at war with the king his lord, but PN₂ killed him'

e-nu-ma zēr <hur>hur(r)ati šabūtūya zēr hurhur(r)ati šūbilanni (PRU 6 8:7-10) 'now then, *h*.-seed is my desire; send me *h*.-seed'

Contrast this with the use of *enūma/inūma* as a temporal subordinator in standard Akkadian.⁷

e-nu-ma eliš la nabū šamāmu... inušu (*Enuma eliš* I 1) 'when heaven above had not (yet) been named, then...'

Akkadian texts from Carchemish show a development comparable to that found in Ugaritic texts. Here too Huehnergard concludes that the element

⁶ The word *tupšarru* 'scribe' is absent from Huehnergard 1989 but may be found in Huehnergard 1979: 338.

⁷ It is possible that temporal *i-nu-ma/e-nu-ma* is to be related to Literary Arabic *hīn-un* 'time'—cf. the use of the latter in conjunction *hīna* 'when' and the temporal adverb *hīna'iḍin* 'at that time.'

enūma “is not a conjunction... but rather a sentence-initial adverb, meaning something like ‘now then’” (Huehnergard 1979: 140-141), since (1) the particle occurs in simple sentences, and (2), in complex sentences, the second clause is marked with the overt conjunction *u* ‘and’, while its verb does not contain the subjunctive marking normal for a subordinate-clause verb.

enūma hapīr[ū] ittīya ul ašbū u anumma PN ātabakma ittalak (3:3:6ff.)
 ‘Now then, the Hapiru are not living with me; and I have just sent PN off, and he has gone’ (Huehnergard 1979: 141)

In the Akkadian letters from El-Amarna we likewise find uses of *inūma* which diverge from its normal Akkadian function. As Moran (1992: 4) notes, “[e]pistolary *inūma* introduces a clause that states the fact of communication, with or without following a direct quotation.”

ù i-nu-ma ta-aš-pu-ra um-ma-a-mi (EA 1:26, 36-37) ‘And as for your writing me...’⁸
i-nu-ma šap-ra-ta a-na ia-ši (EA 252) ‘As for what thou hast written to me...’ (Albright 1943: 30)

As Albright points out, the use of *inūma/enūma* on the western periphery of Akkadian in the sense of the Canaanite conjunction *kī* ‘that’ is not at all unfamiliar.

mi-nu-ú-um ḥi-ṭi i-nu-ma ú-ul ta-pa-ul-[an-ni] (Shechem) ‘What is my offense that thou hast not paid [me]?’ (Albright 1943: 31)
i-na-an-na a-mur-ni i-nu-ma i-pu-šu ṭābam it-ti-ka (Taanach) ‘Now behold me, that I do well by thee!’ (Albright 1944: 23)

Smith (1949: 15) cites a passage from a statue from Alalakh which resembles the preceding text, in that the clause marked with *i-nu-ma* is the object of the verb *amāru* ‘see.’ Smith relates *i-nu-ma* here to Hebrew *hinne^h*.

i-mu-ru-un-ni-ma i-nu-ma mar be-li-šu-nu a-na-ku ‘they saw me, and behold, I was the son of their lord’

The various aberrant uses of the Akkadian form *inūma/enūma* have been ascribed to the influence of a similar-sounding West Semitic particle. As

⁸ Knudtzon (1915: 62-63) rendered this construction as “und wenn du gesprochen hast also...” with the reading of *inūma* as a subordinating conjunction but with no visible main clause. Moran chooses to interpret it with “as for...” implying a following “comment”-clause, but in his reading the clauses containing the passages cited are followed simply by “this is what you have said.” Under the circumstances, a reading ‘behold’ or ‘indeed’—i.e., with *inūma* functioning as a presentation particle prefixed to a main clause, comparable to *hinne^h*, etc.—does not appear outlandish.

we have seen above, the existence of such a particle in Ugarit (*hn*, etc.) is well documented, and the translations which Huehnergard and Moran provide for these passages are not far from comparable passages in Hebrew and Arabic containing *hinne^h* or *'inna*. The “epistolary *inūma*” of El Amarna in particular calls to mind the use of *'inna* with *qāla* ‘say’ in Arabic.

2.2.1.7 Traces of Ethiopic counterparts to *'inna*

Dillmann (1907: 375-377) sees traces of a counterpart to Arabic *'inna* in Gə‘əz in such elements as the particle *na-*. This element is inflected with suffixes marking person, number, and gender (though it does not appear with the second person), forming a paradigm comparable to that of Arabic *'in(na)-nī*, *'inna-hu*, *'inna-hā*, etc.

Table 7: Paradigm of Gə‘əz *naya*

| | Singular | Plural |
|---------|-------------|---------------|
| 1 | <i>naya</i> | <i>nayana</i> |
| 3 masc. | <i>nayo</i> | <i>nayomu</i> |
| 3 fem. | <i>nayā</i> | <i>nayon</i> |

In addition, the words *nawā* and *nāhu*, both of which mean ‘behold!’, seem to have their origin in the same particle, as does the particle *'ən-kəmu* ‘there! you’ (evidently the formal counterpart of Arabic *'inna-kum*) rendering λαβετε in Matthew 26: 26 (Dillmann 1907: 376).

2.2.2 Arabic *'inna* and *'in*

The distinction between Arabic *'inna* and its “lightened” counterpart *'in* has found several tentative interpretations. Barth ([1913] 1967: 99-100) took *'in* to be the basic form and *'inna* to be a compound construction consisting of **(/h)in* and a particle **-nē/*-nā*. While Barth does not define the nature of the latter particle, he does suggest that other manifestations of it are to be found in **'an-nē* (whence Arabic *'annā* ‘whence,’ Hebrew *'ānēl'ānā* ‘where’)—and, with the personal suffixes, in Gə‘əz *naya* (see above).

The absence of any identifiable semantic distinction between *'inna* and *'in* may lie behind the reluctance of several researchers to take *'inna* to be a compound. Rabin (1951: 171-172), following Reckendorf (1967: 299-300), identifies the shortened form *'in* as original and maintains that the form *'inna* has arisen through a historically secondary gemination, although the nature of this development remains undefined. The more archaic form *'in*, in Rabin’s opinion, originally escaped the effects of the gemination in those environments in which the final nasal of the word was assimilated to a following velar—i.e., **'in fa'ala* > **'inn- fa'ala*, but **'in kāna* > **'iṇ kāna* > *'in kāna*—but the ungeminated form has since spread beyond this

environment. It will be suggested below, however, that the systematic appearance of “lightened” *'in* in conjunction with *kāna* and (less frequently) *kāda*, which Nebes points out (see below), may have a semantic rather than a phonological motivation. If this is the case, it proves necessary to look elsewhere for the source of the formal bifurcation of *'inna* and *'in*.

The gemination which has been proposed by Reckendorf and Rabin in order to account for *'inna* alongside *'in* lacks convincing parallels and must be regarded as *ad hoc*. It must be granted, however, that we find no good parallel to the loss of a word-final syllable, rendering it no less *ad hoc* to claim that *'in* has appeared through a truncation of *'inna*. However, a third alternative is available if we reconstruct **'inn* as the source of the Arabic form, with a geminate **n* but without a following vowel. If such a form existed in pre-Arabic, it may readily be imagined that it would have developed a final vowel, by which the form would have been integrated into the permissible phonotactics of Arabic, for which a word-final cluster **-nn* would not have been possible. This is precisely what we find elsewhere in the case of verbal forms containing an underlying geminate cluster, such as *radda*, *yaruddu*. For those portions of the paradigm in which there should be a cluster in word-final position—i.e., the imperative (masculine singular) and the jussive (second-person masculine singular and third-person singular), which have no final vowel—and where we would therefore expect to find the word ending in a geminate cluster, we find that an extra vowel is added.⁹

| | Regular Verb ('write') | Geminate-Root Verb |
|----------------------|------------------------|------------------------|
| Imperative Masc. Sg. | (u)ktub-Ø | rudd-a (*rudd-Ø) |
| Jussive 2 Masc. Sg. | ta-ktub-Ø | ta-rudd-a (*ta-rudd-Ø) |
| Jussive 3 Masc. Sg. | ya-ktub-Ø | ya-rudd-a (*ya-rudd-Ø) |
| Jussive 3 Fem. Sg. | ta-ktub-Ø | ta-rudd-a (*ta-rudd-Ø) |

Table 8: Arabic endingless verbs:
Sound and geminate roots contrasted

⁹ There is some amount of free variation allowed by the normative grammar, since such clusters may also be resolved by dissolving the cluster through metathesis (i.e., *ya-rdud-Ø* alongside *ya-rudd-a*). In early Arabic there was also a good deal of dialectal variation in the nature of the inserted vowel: "... In the East[ern dialects of ancient Arabic] biliteral forms were used everywhere, but the dialects differed with regard to the final vowel. This was at first neutral (ə), being merely there to avoid the meeting of three consonants. In 'Asad and part of Tamim it was heard as *a* when followed by *hamzat al-waṣl*, as *i* otherwise (Sibawaihi, ii, 162). The Qais dialect of Ghani, Ka'b, and 'Uqail had invariably *-i*: *firri*, *malli*, *ruddi* (Sibawaihi, loc. cit.; Zamakhshari. Mufaṣṣal, p. 168). Some Tamimis harmonized the neutral vowel with the stem-vowel: *firri*, *malla*, *ruddu* (Sibawaihi)... In the Koran we have *yartadid* (ii, 214/217) but also *yartadda* (v, 59/54) 'he revolts'; *yushāqiqi llāha* (viii, 13), but also *yushāqqi llāha* (lix, 4) 'sets himself against God'..." (Rabin 1951: 162).

It would therefore not be surprising to find an original **'inn* giving way to an attested Arabic *'inn-a*. The alternate shape of the word, *'in*, would therefore represent the result of an alternative approach to dealing with the phonotactic dilemma posed by the word-final geminate: instead of the addition of a vowel, we find here the elision of one of the offending consonants. This strategy, too, is not without parallel in Literary Arabic. Although the normative grammar calls for the interposition of a vowel to avoid the triconsonantal sequences which would result from the addition of a subject-suffix beginning with a consonant (e.g., *-tu*, *-ta*, *-ti*, etc.) to a verb-stem ending in a geminate cluster (e.g. *radd-*)—hence, e.g., *radad-tu* rather than **radd-tu*—it is known that there were early Arabic dialects¹⁰ which resolved this problem by simplifying the geminate (cf., in the Qur'ān, *ḍalta* (XX: 97) 'I went astray' instead of standard Arabic *ḍalilta*). This phenomenon is analogous to what may have led to the appearance of *'in* from an earlier **'inn*—perhaps *'in* was originally a dialectal form corresponding to the *'inn-a* of other dialects.¹¹

2.2.3 An early Semitic particle *(*hl'*)*in(n)*

Whatever the details of the formal reconstruction may entail, it appears that we are justified in reconstructing a particle *(*hl'*)*in(n)*- for early Western Semitic. Judging by Arabic, Hebrew, and Ugaritic, which provide the most extensive data, this particle could occur prefixed to a clause as a marker of some form of emphasis, as well as evidently being used for the introduction of new elements into the discourse, often underscoring their unexpectedness. Finally, it also seems to have been associated with clausal subordination, particularly with the citation of quotes, if we may judge by Arabic *qāla 'inna* and the "epistolary" *inūma* of El Amarna.

In connection with this last aspect, we note that the *(*hl'*)*in(n)*- of West Semitic parallels Akkadian *umma* 'thus,' which also serves to introduce quotations. As examples of the use of *umma* in this role, sentences such as the following Old Akkadian passages may be noted (Gelb 1957: 47):

um-ma PN *ni-iš* LUGAL *it-ma* (Yondorf unpub.) 'thus PN swore the oath of the king...'

Akkadian *umma* is particularly well known on account of its role in the familiar epistolary formula exemplified in the following passage.

¹⁰ This was characteristic of the Sulaym, according to Ibn Mālik, but traces of the same formation are documented from other tribes (Rabin 1951: 163).

¹¹ Comparable instances of "Silbenkürzung" are also seen by Fischer (1972: 29) in *muḍ* 'since' (< **munḍ* < *munḍu*) and *fa-qaṭ* 'only' (< **qaṭṭ*).

um-ma šar-ru-um-ma a-na PN qí-bí-ma (RA XXIV 44) ‘thus the king (says): to PN say...’

It is clear from Old Akkadian sources originating prior to the third dynasty of Ur (ca. 2117-2008 B.C.) that the particle *umma* is to be traced back to an earlier form with a front vowel in the first syllable (Gelb 1957: 47).

en-ma PN₁ a-na PN₂ è-ga-bi (BM 54318 rev.) ‘thus (*enma*) PN₁ says to PN₂...’

en-ma LUGAL a-na PN (RTC 77:4) ‘thus (*enma*) the king (says) to PN...’

We may hypothesize that the final syllable of *en-ma*, *um-ma* is the familiar enclitic particle *-ma*, which serves a multitude of functions in Akkadian. The early spelling with *en-* suggests that in its vowelizing the earliest shape of this particle in East Semitic might have been rather close to pre-Arabic **’inn* and to Hebrew *hinn-*. Given the unexpected relation between the vowel of Old Akkadian *enma* and that of later *umma*, as well as the apparent lack of assimilation in the *n* of *enma*, this is clearly an etymological puzzle which is yet to be fully resolved. For the moment, however, it is plausible to speculate that the opening syllable *en-/um-* is to be related to West Semitic **(h’)in(n)-*.¹²

2.2.4 The role of Semitic **(h’)in(n)-*

It is possible that Akkadian *enma/umma* provides an explanation for the syntactic ambivalence of **(h’)in(n)-*, which, as we have seen, is attested either in main clauses (*’inna zaydan la-karīmun* ‘*inna*, Zayd *la-(is)* noble’) or in connection with subordinated clauses (e.g., *na’lamu ’inna zaydan la-karīmun* ‘we know that Zayd *la-(is)* noble’). Although, as a quotative marker, Akkadian *enma/umma* is directly associated with clausal connection, in syntactic terms it is clearly an element of the higher clause rather than of the subordinate clause. The function of *enma/umma* is thus

¹² See Whiting (1987: 78-79) for a discussion of the various emphatic particles in Akkadian relevant to this issue. The distinction of “front vowel + *n*” corresponding to *-um-* calls to mind other correspondences which have been ascribed to the presence of an early Semitic syllabic nasal, i.e., a Proto-Semitic nasal which became syllabified on account of its location within a complex consonantal cluster (see Testen 1985)—cf. Hebrew *ben*, Akkadian *binum* ‘son’ < **bñ-um* (cf. Arabic *(i)bn-un*), Hebrew *šem*, Akkadian *šum-um* ‘name’ < **šm̄-um* (cf. Arabic *(i)sm-un*). Might we conjecture that Akkadian *umma* derives from an original **(h’)n-* + *-ma*, by means of the assimilation of the **n* to the following **m* (i.e., **(h’)n* + *-mā* > **(h’)m̄-ma* > *um-ma*, just as **šm̄-um* > *šum-um*)? Testen (1993) cites possible parallels to this early Akkadian sonorant assimilation in Akkadian *ina* ‘in, from’ (< **nna* < **ñna*), *i* (*niprus*) ‘let us (divide)’ (< **n-niprus* < **l-niprus*). If this is the case, it may prove possible to see in a Proto-Semitic particle **(h’)n-* the ultimate source of Arabic *’in(n)-* and Hebrew *hinn-*. For discussion of the issue of the relation between Arabic *’-* and Hebrew *h-* in this and other etyma, see Chapter Four below.

best described as an adverbial cataphor ('folgendermassen' von Soden 1969: 176) which anticipates the substance of the upcoming quotation. The quotation itself, the antecedent of *enma/umma*, is then appended asyndetically to the main clause.

The placement of *enma/umma* in Akkadian makes it clear that this particle belongs to the higher clause. If Akkadian were not as consistent in placing the verb in clause-final position, however, the syntactic position of the particle would not be as obvious. If we assume that Akkadian's verb-final structure is historically secondary, and that early Semitic resembled Classical Arabic and Biblical Hebrew in typically having the verb in the initial position in the clause, we find that the early Semitic prototype of Akkadian *enma/umma* may well have occurred in constructions such as the following, where the particle is located in the final position of the higher clause directly preceding the lower clause.

*Said the man as follows: This is good.

From such a construction it would be but a short step to a reanalysis by which **(hl')in(n)-* '*as follows' comes to be a subordinating conjunction 'that' ('Said the man that this is good,' Arabic *qāla l-raǧulu 'inna hādā tayyibun*).

It is thus possible that we would do well to reconstruct two entirely different syntactic sources for Arabic complex sentences containing *'inna* and those containing *'anna*. Only the latter particle is a true subordinator—*'anna* is restricted to lower clauses, while, as we have seen, *'inna* is just as widely attested in main clauses. Ultimately, therefore, a pair of sentences such as *na'lamu 'anna zaydan karīmun* and *na'lamu 'inna zaydan la-karīmun*, which in historical Arabic are essentially identical in meaning ('we know that Zayd (is) noble') and all but identical in form, and which, as we have seen in Chapter One, caused considerable confusion for the ancient grammarians, originally had distinct structures of the following types.

| | |
|--------------------------|----------------------------------|
| [<i>na'lamu</i> | [<i>'anna zaydan karīmun</i>]] |
| [we know | [that Zayd (is) noble]] |
| [<i>na'lamu 'inna</i>] | [<i>zaydan la-karīmun</i>] |
| [we know as follows:] | [Zayd <i>la-</i> (is) noble] |

In the latter structure the presence of *la-* (said by the grammarians, as we have seen, to be obligatory with *'inna* and a subordinate clause) is interesting. If ... *zaydan la-karīmun* in this structure was originally an independent asyndetic clause (unlike ... *'anna zaydan (*la-)karīmun*), then the presence of *la-* calls to mind the fact that the various manifestations of the asseverative *lām* of the classical grammarians are overwhelmingly associated with main clauses. Indeed, in light of this interpretation of

...*'inna zaydan la-karīmun* it might well be argued that a restriction to main clauses was a characteristic of *la-* in general.¹³

The Akkadian value 'thus, folgendermassen, as follows, *sic*,' if assigned to early West Semitic **(h')in(n)-*, is of considerable value in characterizing certain of the various functions in which we find the reflexes of **(h')in(n)*.¹⁴ The use of Hebrew *hinne^h* and its relatives as a particle for the presentation of new information (cf. the traditional translation 'behold!') would proceed naturally from such a sense: constructions like *hinne^h hā'eš wəhā'ešīm* (Genesis 22: 7) 'behold the fire and the wood' or *wayyābō' dāwid wa'ānāšāw 'el-hā'ir wəhinne^h šārūpā bā'eš* (1 Samuel 30: 3) 'and David and his men came to the city and behold (it had been) burned with fire' parallel the quotative use of **(h')in(n)-* as a marker of anticipated material (i.e., **(observe) the following: the fire and the wood...*, 'they came to the city and (observed) as follows: it had been burned...').

Much the same may be said of the use of **(h')in(n)* as a marker of emphasis. Whether or not we take Arabic expressions like *'inna zaydan la-karīmun* '*inna* Zayd *la-*is noble' to be abbreviated from expressions containing a performative oath expression (*'aqsimu bi-llāhi...* 'I swear by God...'), as many of the traditional grammarians did, it is not surprising to find a particle whose original meaning was 'as follows' ultimately becoming used in this sense.

Taking **(h')in(n)* to have had an original sense of 'thus,' finally, enables us to comprehend the fact that a particle with this shape has come to mean 'yes' in several of the Semitic languages—cf. Syriac *'în* 'yes' (e.g., *'în 'aw lā pānā lī* (Clem. Rom. Rec. 94.29) 'responde mihi immo vel non') and Classical Arabic *'inna* as it is found in passages such as the following (from 'Ubayd-allāh b. Qays al-Ruqayyāt):

| | |
|------------------------------------|--|
| <i>wa-yaqulna šaybun qad 'alā-</i> | <i>ka wa-qad kabirta fa-qultu 'innah</i> |
| 'And they (fem.) say, "Old age has | you and you have grown old," and I |
| come upon | said, "Yes (' <i>innah</i>)"... |

Similarly, when told, "May God curse the she-camel which carried me to thee," Ibn al-Zubayr is said to have responded *'inna wa-rākibahā* 'Yes

¹³ Such a characterization ultimately depends upon the manner in which we choose to parse such constructions as *al-lām al-mutawaffi'a* (*la-'in daxala la-'adribannahu* 'la-if he enters la-I will strike him') and the *la-* following an overt oath (*'aqsimu bi-llāhi 'inna zaydan la-karīmun* 'I swear by God *'inna*-Zayd *la-*is noble.' The latter type, at least, might well be amenable to a parsing as an original pair of independent clauses rather than as a case of subordination ('[I swear (as follows):] [Zayd *la-*is noble]'). Compare Old Akkadian *um-ma PN ni-iš LUGAL it-ma* 'thus PN swore the oath of the king:...'.

¹⁴ Note that we find, among the various meanings of Syriac *'în*, 'ita, sic est, sic sit'—'*în wa('mîn* 'ita sit, amen' (B.O. iii. i. 239, 333, 601), *nethase('* *'în* 'propitius sit ei Deus, amen' (C.S.B. 395 et al.).

('inna), and her rider.'¹⁵ Latin and the Romance languages afford clear parallels to the development of a particle meaning 'thus' into one meaning 'yes'—cf. Latin *ita* and *sic*, and, ultimately, French *si*, Spanish *sí*.¹⁶

Given its independent value of 'yes,' we may tentatively think of Arabic 'inna as a marker of overt affirmation. As we have seen from the discussion of the anatomy of the oath, the classical grammarians regarded 'inna as a constituent in a paradigm-set which contrasted the affirmation-markers 'inna, *la-* and (with the past tense) *qad* to the negation-markers *lā*, *mā*, and (the negating) 'in.

... They connect the two clauses [the *qasam* (oath) and its *muqṣam* 'alayhi] by particles called by the grammarians the 'apodosis of the oath' (*jawāb al-qasam*). These are 'inna (with the vowel *i* and gemination) and the *lām*, which have a single meaning, as when you say: *wa-llāhi 'inna zaydan xayrun minka* 'By God, 'inna Zayd [is] better than you!' and *wa-llāhi la-zaydun xayrun minka* 'By God, *la*-Zayd [is] better than you!' or when you say: *wa-llāhi la-yaqūmanna zaydun* 'By God, *la*-will rise Zayd!'... Others [of these particles] are 'in (ungeminated and with the vowel *i*) and *mā*, and these have a single meaning as when you say: *wa-llāhi mā fa'altu* and *wa-llāhi 'in fa'altu* with one meaning 'By God, I did not do...!' And another is *lā* as when you say *wa-llāhi lā 'af'alu* 'By God, I will not do....!'... [Ibn Manḍūr: 561]

The fact that 'inna is fundamentally optional is understandable if we take it to be a marker of affirmation: overt marking for affirmation (outside of the environment of questions) is typically unnecessary, since the absence of negation alone suffices under normal conditions.

2.3.1 *The tense/aspect question in Arabic*

Before looking directly at *qad*, the other particle routinely associated with *la-*, it is necessary to consider briefly the long-standing question of the roles of tense and aspect in the verbal system of Arabic. The Arabic verbal paradigm is based upon a two-way opposition between a form traditionally known in Western scholarship as the "perfective" (or, in traditional Arabic grammar, *al-māḍī* 'the past') in which agreement with the subject is

¹⁵ Cited in Lane (ult. from Ibn Hišām), s.v. 'inna. In the case of the first passage alternative readings have taken 'innah to stand for a truncation of 'innah[u ka-ḍālīka] 'verily, it [is so],' rather than as the pausal form of an unsuffixed 'inna.

¹⁶ Presumably Akkadian *anna* (*anni*, *annū*) 'yes' (in Old Babylonian, El-Amarna, Nuzi, Standard Babylonian) must be related to this issue in some manner, although the nature of the Akkadian vowel remains a problem—cf. *an-na ulla aḥāmeš ētappalu edabbuba surrāti* (Borger Esarh. 12:22) 'they answer each other yes but (mean) no, speaking lies,' *an-ni bītum... jattan* (PBS 7 21:20) 'yes, indeed, the house is mine,' etc. (CAD I: 125).

marked by means of suffixes (e.g., *katab-tu* 'I wrote') and a form known as the "imperfective" (in Arabic *al-muḍāri'* 'the resembling'¹⁷) in which the subject is marked using prefixes (e.g., *'a-ktubu* 'I write').

Cited in isolation, it might appear that the "perfective" and "imperfective" manifestations of the verb may be characterized simply as the "past tense" and the "present tense" (or better, the "non-past tense"), respectively—cf., e.g., *katab-tu* 'I wrote' vs. *'a-ktubu* 'I write/am-writing/shall write.' Once one considers these forms within the context of their various sentential environments, however, it quickly becomes apparent that such a simple description is misleading. The "imperfective" form, for example, may be used systematically to refer to events located in the past.

| | | | |
|----------------------------|------------|--------------------------|----------------|
| <i>ra'ā</i> | <i>-nī</i> | <i>'aktubu</i> | <i>kitāban</i> |
| saw (perf. 3 m. sg.)- | me | write (impf. 1sg.indic.) | book (acc.sg.) |
| 'he saw me writing a book' | | | |

Researchers have consequently felt it necessary to regard the *katabtu*/*'aktubu* distinction as a reflection of something other than tense. The relevant opposition has long been labeled "aspect" by a majority of investigators: the prefixed form is said to serve as an imperfective, conveying the notions of incompleteness, duration, iterativity, etc., while the meaning of completeness (perfectivity) is ascribed to the suffixed form.¹⁸ An Arabic verb such as *'aktubu* has therefore been analyzed as a reference to an ongoing act of writing, with no intrinsic location in time; the apparent present-tense reference of *'aktubu* 'I write' is held to be a contextual by-product, rather than an inherent quality of the verbal form itself. In contrast to a language such as Russian, which in addition to aspect (*ja pisal* 'I was writing' vs. *ja napisal* 'I wrote') makes use of tense in its verbal system by employing a morphological distinction between past-tense and non-past-tense manifestations of the imperfective aspect (*ja pisal* 'I was writing' vs. *ja pišu* 'I am writing'), Arabic is said by this analysis to use a single, tenseless form *'aktubu*, the temporal location of which is specified through the extraverbal context.

¹⁷ So called because it resembles the substantive in that its vocalic endings, which mark modal oppositions (indicative *'aktubu*, subjunctive *'aktuba*, jussive *'aktub*), may be compared with the final vowels of the substantive, which express case (nominative *al-rajulu* 'the man,' accusative *al-rajula*, genitive *al-rajuli*).

¹⁸ Cf., e.g., Fleisch (1974: 12): "Une nuance d'aspect, très générale, qui reste fondamentale dans le système, se trouve dans l'opposition : *accompli/inaccompli*; accompli, l'action est considérée comme finie, conduite à son terme; inaccompli, l'action est considérée comme non finie, non conduite à son terme, c'est-à-dire : en cours de réalisation. Cette opposition donne leur valeur aux deux paradigmes verbaux, distingués par la position des marques personnelles dans la conjugaison : suffixées dans l'un : *accompli*; préfixées dans l'autre : *inaccompli*."

There are problems inherent in describing the distinction between *katabtu* and *'aktubu* solely as one of aspect, however. The suffixed form shows no real sign of entailing the "completedness" which would be appropriate for a form putatively serving to express the perfective aspect. The aspectual properties of a sentence such as *kāna karīman* '(he) was noble' do not appear to be significantly different in aspectual terms from *huwa karīmun* 'he (is) noble,' despite the presence of the "perfective" verb *kāna*. Moreover, if we describe the suffixed form *katab-tu* as an atemporal perfective, we are called upon to explain the fact that, outside of a limited set of syntactic situations, the perfectivity in question is restricted to events in the past, and is excluded, for example, from perfective situations in the future (i.e., there is no **katabtu l-kitāba yadan* '*I shall write the book tomorrow,' equivalent to the Russian perfective *ja napišu knigu zavtra*). Aside from a limited number of specific constructions (in most of which the relevant category might just as easily be considered modality as aspect)¹⁹ there do not appear to be compelling grounds to regard the suffixed form as anything other than a past-tense form.

An alternative approach to this issue—one which will be adopted here—is to take the factor distinguishing *katabtu* from *'aktubu* indeed to be tense, but a manifestation of the category of tense which differs from tense as it is found in the familiar European languages in that Arabic tense is relative rather than absolute. The temporal reference for English *I am writing* is provided by the point in time at which it is uttered, and the past tense (*I wrote, was writing, etc.*) and the future tense (*I shall write*) are defined with respect to this point in time. For a relative tense system like that of Arabic, the "present" is not defined by the moment of speaking but is a point of temporal reference stipulated through other means,²⁰ while upon this relative "present" a relative "past" and "future" in turn are constructed. The construction which has been regarded as an Arabic (past) imperfective—i.e., *kuntu 'aktubu* 'I was writing' = was ("perf." 1 sg.) write ("imperf." 1 sg. indic.)—may therefore be thought of as a present-tense construction whose reference point has been fixed at a point in what is (from the point of view of the speech act) the past. Consider the relation of a circumstantial clause to its matrix clause.

¹⁹ Cf., e.g., blessings and curses such as *la'anaka llāhu* 'God curse you!' and the various conditional syntagms such as *law daxala ra'aytuhu* 'if he had entered I would have seen him.'

²⁰ If the context alone is not sufficient to indicate that the "present" is a point in the past, the temporal orientation may be explicitly shifted to a point in the past by the insertion of an auxiliary verb *kāna* 'was.'

| | | | |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| <i>daxal-a</i> | <i>l-bayt-a</i> | <i>ya-qra'u</i> | <i>kitāb-an</i> |
| entered-3m.sg. | the-house-acc. | 3m.sg.-reads | book-acc.indef. |
| 'he entered the house reading a book' | | | |

The verb *ya-qra'u* 'he reads' represents an activity going on within a "present" defined as the point in the past at which the "entering" occurred. The temporal relation between the action in the circumstantial clause and the action in the main clause—and thus the temporal relation between the action of the circumstantial clause and the moment of speech—is a function of the nature of circumstantial clauses rather than a function of the verb, and it is therefore misleading to describe *ya-qra'u* here as being in the "past" tense. This is apparent from circumstantial clauses which contain no verbs at all, and which nonetheless manifest the same temporal dependency with respect to the main clause.

| | | | |
|--------------------------------|-----------------|---------------|----------------------------|
| <i>daxal-a</i> | <i>l-bayt-a</i> | <i>wa-hwa</i> | <i>qāri'-un</i> |
| entered-3m.sg. | the-house-acc. | and-he | reading(act.part.)-nom.sg. |
| 'he entered the house reading' | | | |

Similarly, a past tense may be predicated upon a "present" distinct from that of the speech act. For a past-tense construction like those above, the result of a past reference in the circumstantial clause is (from the point of view of the English translation) a pluperfect, a past event which precedes the event stated in the main clause.

| | | | |
|--|-----------------|---------------|--------------------|
| <i>daxal-a</i> | <i>l-bayt-a</i> | <i>wa-qad</i> | <i>da'at-hu</i> |
| entered-3m.sg. | the-house-acc. | and-qad | called(3f.sg.)-him |
| 'he entered the house, and she had called him' | | | |

When the tense of the matrix clause is shifted from the past tense, the temporal location of the circumstantial clause is adjusted accordingly, maintaining the relative temporal orientation with respect to the higher clause.

| | |
|---|---|
| <i>ya-dxulu l-bayta l-'āna ya-qra'u</i> | 'he is now entering the house reading' |
| <i>ya-dxulu l-bayta 'aḥyānan ya-qra'u</i> | 'he sometimes enters the house reading' |
| <i>sa-ya-dxulu l-bayta ya-qra'u</i> | 'he will enter the house reading' |

It should also be noted that the temporal dependency in question is found not only between main clauses and subordinated clauses, but also between closely associated main clauses.

In the absence of a specifically defined point in time serving as the clause's "present," we find that the point in time of the speech act serves as a default present. In such cases the temporal relations correspond fairly

closely to those of a language with an absolute tense system (*yadxulu l-bayta* 'he is entering the house,' *daxala l-bayta* 'he entered the house').²¹

2.3.2.1 *The functions of qad*

Keeping the values of the so-called "perfective" and "imperfective" in mind, let us now consider the role of the verbal particle *qad*. This particle is preposed directly to a finite verb in either the "perfective" (i.e., the relative past *katabtu*) or the "imperfective" (i.e., the relative non-past 'aktubu). With each of these the particle is said to serve a different set of functions.

qad + "Perfective" Verb

1. Proximity to the present
2. Anteriority
3. Resultativity
4. Expected information
5. Emphasis

qad + "Imperfective" Verb

1. Iterativity
2. Potentiality
3. Emphasis

2.3.2.2 *Qad + the past*

The construction consisting of *qad* + the past ("perfective") is most familiar as a marker of (1) affirmation/emphasis or (2) anteriority and/or resultativity. When marking the main verb, *qad* is said to indicate 'the bringing close of the past to the present' (*taqrīb al-māḍī min al-ḥāl*), as well as to lend emphasis (*al-taḥqīq*) to an assertion that an action has been accomplished. In the latter role, it is familiar in answers to questions such as the following:

qāla maslamatum li-nuṣaybin 'a-mtadaḥta fulānan fa-qāla qad fa'altu
'Maslama said to Nuṣayb, "Did you praise so-and-so?" and he said
"*qad*-I did."

Some grammarians maintain that statements marked with *qad* indicate that the information conveyed is anticipated by the hearer.

²¹ This brief characterization of Arabic tense is based upon that proposed by Comrie (1976: 78-81; 1985: 63-64). A comparable interpretation of Arabic is provided by Kurylowicz (1973), who speaks of a basic opposition of "simultaneity" vs. "anteriority." The question of the roles of tense and aspect in literary Arabic and in the dialects remains a topic which merits continued investigation (see Eisele 1988, with a survey of the literature pp. 6-41).

Howard Aronson and Victor Friedman (p.c.) have suggested that the relevant factor might be primarily thought of as Jakobson's "taxis" rather than "tense"—"... TAXIS characterizes the narrated event in relation to another narrated event and without reference to the speech event..." (Jakobson 1971: 131).

...kullamā 'ulqiya fihā fawjun sa'alahum xazanatuhā 'a-lam ya'tikum naḍīrun qālū balā qad jā'anā naḍīrun... (LXVII: 8-9) '... whenever a group is cast into [the Fire], its keepers ask, "Did not a warner come to you?" They say, "Yes indeed, a warner did come to us (*qad jā'anā*)..."

Qad is also regarded as all but obligatory in circumstantial clauses containing a "perfective" verb, indicating that the event related in the main clause occurs within the context of a situation resulting from a preceding event (*θumma 'anzala 'alaykum... 'amanatan nu'āsan yaḡšā ṭā'ifatan minkum wa-ṭā'ifatan qad 'ahammathum 'anfusuhum...* (III: 154) 'Then He sent calm down upon a group of you who were overcome by slumber, while (another) group was stirred up by themselves...'), and in clauses constituting the object of a verb of knowledge or perception (*fī'l al-qalb*)—*'aḡunnu zaydan qad ḡahaba* 'I believe Zayd has left.'²² On the other hand, *qad* is not normally found in negated clauses, in interrogative sentences marked with *hal*, or in the protases of conditional constructions marked with *'in*. *Qad* is also conspicuously absent from narratives set in the past, except where it appears with a "pluperfect" force in circumstantial clauses.

2.3.2.3 *Qad + the present*

It is likewise difficult to subsume the various uses of *qad* with the "imperfective" (present) under a single function.

Nicht so oft wie beim Perf. steht [*qad*] beim Imperf. Es führt hier die Handlung ein, die vor einem gewissen Moment andauerte oder sich wiederholte und erhielt die spezielle Bedeutung, dass eine Handlung in jenem Moment nicht zum ersten Male, sondern schon vorher mehr oder weniger häufig geschah, es bedeutet also sowohl «manchmal» als «gar manches Mal», und endlich ist es einfach bekräftigend, indem es eigentlich die Handlung bezeichnete, die in einem gegebenen Augenblicke eintritt wie sie immer eintritt, oder wie sich nicht anders erwarten lässt. [Reckendorf 1967: 299-300]

As examples of the appearance of *qad* with the "imperfective" form Reckendorf cites such passages as the following:

wa-la-qad yakūnu laka l-ba'īdu 'axan wa-yaqṭa'uka l-ḡamīmu (Ham. 530, 15) «manchmal ist dir der Fernstehende ein Bruder und der Nahestehende bricht dir die Treue»

al-mar'u yad'ū li-l-'islāmi wa-ṭūlu 'ayšin qad yaḡurruhu (Labīd 22, 1) «der Mensch ruft nach Wohlergehen, doch gar manches Mal ist ihm langes Leben von Übel»

²² With the raising of "Zayd" to the position of object in the higher clause.

lammā 'aṣawnī kuntu minhum wa-qad 'arā yawāyatahum (Ham. 378, 13)
 «nachdem sie mir zuwidergehandelt hatten, schloss ich mich mit ihnen doch an, obwohl ich ihren Irrtum sah»

Kinberg (1988) observes that reference grammars of Arabic sometimes assign “*qad* + imperfective” a past habitual meaning, on the basis of examples such as the following.

fa-la-qad taṣuddu wa-taqtulu l-'abṭālā (al-Ṭabarī 2, 878, 15) “so plegtest du loszubrechen und die Helden zu tödten”

Kinberg suggests, however, that this temporal orientation is not an inherent component of this use of *qad*, but rather a feature of the context. The temporal behavior of the structure “*qad* + imperfective,” in his view, is thus substantially the same as that of the bare “imperfective.”

... Although in some of these examples *la-qad yaf'alu* refers to the past, it should be emphasized that the past time reference is not intrinsically marked by this structure, but is rather inferred from the context, or in Kuryłowicz's wording, it “is context-conditioned,” rather than “system-conditioned”... This is clearly shown by the fact that in other examples, where the context does not require a past tense interpretation, this structure does not imply a past tense altogether. [Kinberg 1988: 292]

2.3.2.4 Toward a unified interpretation of *qad*

How might the various modes of employment of *qad* be reconciled? Dahl and Talmoudi (1979) ascribe to this particle a value of epistemic modality, deriving the dual roles of *qad* with the two tense-forms from a basic sense of “asseveration.”

This polysemy, which may seem strange at first, is actually fairly common. A speaker who wants to assert that a proposition *p* is true normally has the option between simply stating *p* and stating that *p* is certain, real, factual, etc. In situations where there is no reason to doubt the truth of a statement, the first alternative is usually chosen. Thus the second alternative comes to be used primarily in contexts where there is some doubt or uncertainty or at least reason for such uncertainty. In Gricean terms, some uncertainty is ‘conversationally implicated’. It is only a small step from this use of a construction to one where it becomes a standard way of expressing a supposition or a guess founded on indirect evidence... [Dahl and Talmoudi 1979: 54]

It remains difficult to explain, however, why the roles of asseveration and uncertainty would have come to be connected specifically with the past (*qad fa'ala*) and non-past (*qad yaf'alu*) tenses, respectively. The claim that “... it is not too astonishing that it is a form that has future reference among its standard uses that receives the uncertainty interpretation, given

the fact that most statements about the future are suppositions or guesses” (Dahl and Talmoudi 1979: 54) is not compelling, particularly in light of the fact that instances of a clearly future reading for *qad yaʿfalu* are virtually unknown.²³

If we are correct in taking the distinction between *katabtu* and *ʾaktubu* to be a temporal one rather than an aspectual one, we are free to ask whether Arabic employed other means to express aspectual distinctions. I would like to suggest that the various functions of *qad* as they have been described may all be derived from a single function if we reconstruct the original role of *qad* as that of a marker of perfective aspect. If we take *qad katabtu* to have been marked for perfectivity as well as for tense (in contrast to simple *katabtu*, which would thus be marked for tense but unmarked for aspect), we can understand how *qad* could come to be employed as an expression of resultativity: it is characteristic of completed events to have results, in contrast to a simple past verb such as *katabtu*, which, lacking an explicit indication of a conclusion to the act of writing, would be less effective as a means of conveying a situation obtaining as a result of the act of writing.²⁴ The notions of “emphasis” or “assertion” ascribed to *qad* are similarly consonant with the feature of “completedness,” since in underscoring the assertion that an event truly took place it would be natural to avail oneself of a marker highlighting the successful conclusion of the event—*qad faʿaltu* ‘I did do it.’

The problem of perfectivity is more complicated when it is associated with the present tense. The characterization of an event as “completed” or punctual is inherently less compatible with a temporal environment like the present, in that the present in many languages is conceived of as a situation (“I am (in a state/situation of) walking”) rather than as a temporal point. In a number of languages, the perfective realization of the present is therefore displaced to the future tense, in which “completedness” finds expression more naturally—cf., e.g., Russian perfective *ja napišu* ‘I shall write’ vs. imperfective *ja pišu* ‘I am writing.’ In the present case, Arabic has not made the shift of “perfective present” → “perfective future,”²⁵ but it does appear to have assigned to the “completed” present a modal resonance

²³ It is difficult to regard temporal “futureness” rather than modal “potentiality” as the relevant category in an example such as Dahl and Talmoudi’s *qad yazōro ʾommaho qabla moyādarati el bilādi* ‘he will probably visit his mother before he leaves the country.’ It may be noted that all of Dahl and Talmoudi’s examples are from Modern Standard Arabic, which appears to differ significantly from Classical Arabic in the use of *qad*.

²⁴ Cf. Russian *ja zakryl okno* ‘I closed (perf.) the window’ (which entails resultativity in that it implies that the window is still shut) vs. *ja zakryval okno* ‘I closed (imperf.) the window.’

²⁵ Cf., however, the author’s discussion of the possible development of the Arabic energetic (Testen 1993a).

which lends the construction a nuance of potentiality.²⁶ Following another avenue, the perfectivity of *qad* could be reconciled with the situational nature of the present moment by stretching the definition of the “present” to encompass a series of habitual or iterative actions or events (*qad yaḍurruhu* «gar manches Mal ist ihm (langes Leben) von Übel»), with which the notions of “completedness” and “extent of time” (in the sense of “an ongoing series of completed actions”) are more readily compatible.

An interpretation of *qad* predicated upon the concept of “completedness” is also in accordance with those environments in which *qad* is not found. It is not surprising to find a marker of “completedness” absent from negated sentences. It is less obvious why it should be missing from narrative sequences, but we might speculate that in such constructions the marking of perfectivity would be unnecessary, since the narrative sequence itself tends to impose a perfective reading upon each consecutive verb—given a sequence “John entered the room, lit a cigarette, paced up and down, and sat down,” the natural reading is to take each action to be completed before the following action commences. It is therefore possible that this tendency could have rendered the introduction of an overt marker of perfectivity such as *qad* otiose.

An aspectual interpretation of *qad* is in harmony with several interesting correlations between *qad* and the lexical aspect of the verb with which it is associated (cf. Kinberg 1989). By examining early Arabic oath constructions (in which, as we have seen, *qad* was said by the grammarians to be obligatory with a verb in the past), Kinberg assembled a corpus of instances in which, contrary to expectations, *qad* has been omitted. In “Pre-Classical” (i.e., pre-‘Abbasid) texts, the *qad* was found to be absent from the *jawāb al-qasam* when the verb in the clause following the oath is lexically “non-conclusive”—viz. *wadda* ‘wish,’ *ḥāla* ‘last long,’ *qalla* ‘be rare,’ *ḥalla* ‘remain,’ *kāna* ‘be,’ *fakkara* ‘contemplate,’ *xāla* ‘imagine,’ *ḥamalat* ‘carry (a child in the womb),’ *nāma* ‘sleep,’ *ra’ā* ‘see,’ or *raddada* ‘repeat.’²⁷

²⁶ “In Verbindung mit *qad* bezeichnet das Impf. einen möglicherweise oder wahrscheinlich eintretenden Vorgang: ‘manchmal, vielleicht geschieht...’, ‘es könnte sein, daß geschieht’: ... *qad* ‘aktubu’ ‘es kommt vor, daß ich schreibe’, ‘manchmal schreibe ich’, ... *qad yanāmūna wa-qad ya’kulūna* ‘vielleicht schlafen sie, vielleicht essen sie’.” (Fischer 1972: 95)

²⁷ Kinberg also found occasional cases of *qad* missing before a “conclusive” verb. In these cases he suggests that “the verb denotes the aorist, or a dynamic non-static non-resultant aspect” (1989: 174). The absence of *qad* in such Pre-Classical constructions would therefore fall under the same heading as the absence of *qad* in narrative sequences.

fa-wallāhi la-nazala rasūlu llāhi ṣallā llāhu ‘alayhi wa-sallama ‘ilā l-ṣubḥi wa-‘anāxa wa-nazaltu ‘an ḥaḡibati rāḡili (Sīra II, 342, 13) ‘And by God, the Apostle of God (God pray for him and grant him peace!) descended for the morning prayer and

yā 'umma sa'din wallāhi la-wadidtu 'anna dir'a sa'din kānat 'aṣḥāya mimma hiya (Sīra II, 227, 2) 'O Mother of Sa'd, by God, I wish that Sa'd's breastplate were longer than it is.'

wallāhi la-fakkartu 'alā firāṣi ṭawīlan 'ata'ajjabu min qawmin labbasa llāhu 'uqūlahum (Ibn Sa'd V, 239, 9) 'By God, I contemplated for a long time on my bed, marveling at people whose minds God had made unclear.'

wallāhi la-qalla mā jā'anā min 'ahli l-kūfati (al-Ṭabarī II/3, 1399, 4) 'By God, seldom have people of al-Kūfa come to us.'

In contrast, Kinberg found that *qad* was used freely in Pre-Classical Arabic with "conclusive" verbs to denote a "perfective static resultant aspect." In Classical Arabic, in contrast, Kinberg finds that the main function of *qad* appears to have become the marking of anteriority, with no particular reference to aspect or to resultativity.

Pre-Classical: wallāhi la-qad 'uxbirtu 'annakumā tāba'tumā muḥammadan 'alā dīnihi (Sīra I, 369, 3) 'By God, I have been informed that you followed Muḥammad's religion.'

Classical: wa-la-'amrī la-qad farartu 'anhu wa-lākin ba'da 'an qutila wa-hīna lam 'ajid lī muqātilan (Riwāyāt 81, 8) 'By my life, I did run away leaving him, but (only) after he had been killed, and when I found nobody to fight with me.'

The disjunction between Pre-Classical *qad* and Classical *qad* indicates that a shift in the role of this particle was already taking place in early Arabic. We may describe this shift in terms of the analysis of *qad* provided above by characterizing the particle as being in the process of changing from being a marker of perfective aspect (which thereby had corollary functions in a number of contextually defined areas) to being a marker (or a set of homophonous markers) variously indicating taxis, resultativity, modality, or status, thus resulting in the multiplicity of functions ascribed to *qad* in grammars of the classical language.

made (the camel) kneel, and I went down from upon the clothes carried behind the camel's saddle.'

In several of the cases which Kinberg cites, however, it appears that the asseverative force of the oath is directed not at the main clause but at an accompanying circumstantial clause (*ḥāl*). In such cases it is possible that the *qad* is absent on aspectual grounds, since there would be a natural incompatibility between the perfectivity of *qad* and the inherent imperfectivity of the circumstantial state.

wallāhi la-māta 'abdu l-raḥmāni wa-'inna ra'sahu la-'alā faxiḍi (al-Ṭabarī II/2, 1134, 5) 'By God, 'Abd al-Raḥmān died with his head on my lap.'

...xamsīna rajulan min banī tamīmīn yaṣḥadūna bi-llāhi kulluhum la-qutila ṣāhibukum kāfiran (Sīra II, 629, 1) '...fifty men of the Banū Tamīm, all of them testifying by God your friend was slain as an unbeliever.'

2.3.2.5 *Qad* vs. *la-qad*

Up to this point, we have made no distinction between verbal constructions with *qad* and those with *la-qad*. Such a distinction has only rarely been made in the grammatical literature.²⁸ Even Kinberg, in his investigation of the quite infrequent construction *la-qad* + “imperfective,” concludes that the meaning of *la-qad* is essentially equivalent to the sum of the (presumed) meanings of *la-* and *qad*.²⁹

Another feature marked by this structure [that is, in addition to the interaction with lexical aspect which *la-qad* shares with *qad*—DT] is a modal one, namely assertion by the speaker/writer that the statement is true. This is denoted by the prefix *la-* (the assertive *la-*, *lām at-ta’kīd*). The structure of *qad yaf’alu* without *la-* may also denote an assertion, but unlike *la-qad yaf’alu*, it is not marked as such, and in certain contexts may denote possibility and even doubt (the so-called *qad li-t-taqīl*). [Kinberg 1988: 292]

2.3.2.6 *La-qad* and the “lightened” *’in*

The function of *la-qad* + the past form parallels that of the construction featuring the so-called “lightened *’in*” (*’in al-muxaffafa min al-ṯaqīla*). As we have seen, the particle *’in* is regarded as a shortened form of the emphasizing particle *’inna*, but it differs from *’inna* in that *’in* is said to require the presence of *la-*, whereas with *’inna* the *la-* is merely optional. Nebes (1982, 1985, 1987) has made an extensive survey of the *’in... la...* construction in early Arabic, finding that to an overwhelming degree it is associated with verbal clauses of the types *kāna yaf’alu* (‘he was doing,’ i.e., the past tense of the “present”) and *kāna... + predicate* (‘he was X’). Compare the following Qur’ānic examples:

wa-’in kānū la-yaqūlūna (XXXVII: 167) ‘And *’in* truly they used to *la*-say....’

subhāna rabbīnā ’in kāna wa’dū rabbīnā la-maf’ūlan (XVII: 108) ‘Praise to our Lord, *’in* the promise of our Lord was *la*-fulfilled!’

wa-’in kāna ’aṣḥābu l-’aykati la-ḫālimīna (XV: 78) ‘And *’in* the People of the Thicket were *la*-evildoers’

²⁸ See the discussion of the literature found in Kinberg 1988: 291-292.

²⁹ In addition, Kinberg observes that *la-qad* differs from *qad* in that it never occurs outside of sentence-initial position (leaving aside conjunctions and oaths) and never in subordinate clauses (except for circumstantial clauses “which are syntactically identical in Arabic to coordinated clauses”—1988: 292).

Another situation in which *'in... la-...* is found (particularly in the Qur'ān) is in the environment of the auxiliary verb *kāda* 'all but...':

ta-llāhi 'in kidta la-turdīni (XXXVII: 56/54) 'By God, *'in* you came close to *la*-ruining me!'

'in kāda la-yuḍillunā 'an 'ālihatinā lawlā 'an ṣabarnā 'alayhā (XXV: 42/44) '*in* he all but *la*-led us astray from our gods, were it not for our holding fast to them.'

Nebes (1987: 16-18) found a number of instances in which passages containing *'in... la-...* paralleled passages containing *la-qad* across manuscript variants. This suggests a close connection between these two constructions.

'in kāna 'aḥaduhum la-yubtalā bi-l-faqrī ḥattā mā yajidu 'aḥaduhum 'illā l-'abā'ata yuhawwihā (Ibn Māja Fitān 23) '*in* one of them used to *la*-be tested with poverty until one of them found nothing but a cloak which he wore'

la-qad kāna 'aḥaduhum yubtalā bi-l-faqrī ḥattā mā yajidu 'illā 'abā'ata yajūbuhā (Ibn Sa'd II₂ 12, 25) '*la-qad* one of them was being tested with poverty until he found nothing but a cloak which he wore'

Nebes follows Rabin (who in turn follows Reckendorf) in taking an original **'in* to have been the source of both of the historical particles *'inna* and *'in*. Rabin (1951: 168-172) believes that in the original form the **-n* assimilated to **ḡ* under the influence of a following velar (hence, at this earlier stage, **'iḡ kāna* ← **'in kāna*). Subsequently a gemination of **-n* to **-nn* occurred which gave rise to modern *'inna*, but this gemination did not encompass the assimilated **ḡ*. Later, after the original *-n* had been restored to replace **-ḡ*, the new *'in* (< **'iḡ*) expanded beyond its original environment (before velars). This, in Rabin's view, is the source of the predilection of the lightened *'in* for predicates beginning with forms of the verb *kāna* and, in earlier Arabic, *kāda*.

Beginning from this hypothetical point (i.e., a point in history at which *'in* was found before velars and *'inna* was found elsewhere), Nebes attempts to explain why *la-* would have come to be obligatory with *'in* but only optional with *'inna*. He finds a functional motivation for the appearance of a close correlation between *la-* and *'in* not only in the desire to avoid confusion with the homophonous negative *'in*—a motivation which, as we have seen in Chapter One, was proposed by the ancient grammarians and was the source of their calling this use of *la-* the "distinguishing *lām*"—but also in the fact that *'in... la-...* was limited to main clauses. The introduction of *la-* would thus also have served to distinguish main clauses marked with *'in* (i.e., *'in kāna la-karīman* 'truly he was noble') from clauses containing the conditional *'in* (*'in kāna karīman* 'if he is noble...') and from concessive clauses containing *wa-'in* (...*wa-'in kāna karīman* '...

although he was noble'). Like the classical grammarians, Nebes therefore suggests that the *la-* became obligatory here in order to avoid the ambiguity resulting from the homophony of *'in*.

It has been suggested above, however, that, in the absence of independent phonological grounds for believing that *'inna* could have developed in some manner from an original ungeminated **'in*, we would do better to take the starting point (for Arabic) to have been **'inn*. Since the correlation between the *'in... la...* construction and the verbs *kāna* and *kāda*, albeit conspicuous, is far from perfect, Rabin's suggestion of a causal relationship between the two factors remains a matter of speculation.

It will be seen below that certain of the features of the *'in... la...* construction may be related to more general features of the distribution of *la-*. For the moment we shall merely note that if, as Nebes and Rabin propose, there is a connection between the *'in... la...* construction and the *la-qad* construction, and if our suspicions about the aspectual nature of *qad* are correct, it is possible to find an alternate, semantically motivated explanation for the association of *'in... la...* with predicates containing *kāna* and *kāda*. Both of these auxiliary verbal expressions are aspectually marked, in that they underscore a lack of completion in the predicate. They would thus be inherently incompatible with the notion of perfectivity which we have ascribed above to *qad*.

kāna yaktubu l-kitāba 'he was (in the process of) writing the book'

kāda yaktubu l-kitāba 'he all but wrote the book'

We might therefore say that, at least in these constructions, the *'in... la...* structure is the non-completive counterpart of the completive *la-qad* structure. The addition of the assertive particle *la-* to a past-tense clause that is either markedly completed (through the appearance of *qad*) or markedly non-completed (by virtue of the presence of *kāna*, *kāda*) seems to take place through the mediation of one or the other of these constructions—*la-* + completed = *la-qad...*, *la-* + non-completed = *'in... la...*

| | - <i>la-</i> | + <i>la-</i> |
|-------------|---|---|
| + Completed | <i>qad kataba l-kitāba</i> 'he wrote (perf.) the book' | <i>la-qad kataba l-kitāba</i> ' <i>la-</i> he wrote (perf.)...' |
| - Completed | <i>kāna yaktubu l-kitāba</i> 'he was writing the book' | <i>'in kāna la-yaktubu l-kitāba</i> ' <i>'in</i> he was <i>la-</i> writing...' |

Table 9: *La-* and aspectual marking

It remains to be determined, of course, why the aspectual distinctions should have sorted themselves out in this manner—i.e., why, for example, the "assertive completed" took the form *la-qad kataba* rather than **'in qad kataba la-*..., and why the assertive non-completed took the form *'in kāna la-yaktubu* rather than **la-kāna yaktubu*...—since, as it stands, the choice

between the prefixation of *la-* and the addition of the complete '*in... la...*' construction would appear to be entirely arbitrary. Indeed, it remains to be explained why the addition of *la-* to the simple past (i.e., **la-kataba*, as well as **la-kāna*) appears to have been systematically ruled out. These and related problems will be addressed below.

2.4 On *la-* itself

How may the function of the particle *la-* in early Arabic be described? As we have seen above, *la-* interacts closely with *qad* and '*inna*'. Now that we have an understanding of the natures of the situations in which *la-* is encountered, we may move on to seek to account for the function played by the *la-* itself.

The grammarians were of the opinion that, if there is a single sense to be ascribed to the particle *la-*, it must be some form of "emphaticness" (*al-ta'kīd*, *al-tawkīd*). The vague cover term "emphatic," however, may encompass a rather large expanse of phenomena.

The concept of the oath was felt by the grammarians to lie at the heart of the use of *la-*. Whether it is associated with a statement of fact or a statement of intent, the oath capitalizes upon the personal relationship between the speaker and the addressee in order to index truth. It establishes the speaker as the authority responsible for the validity of the assertion.

It is suggested here that Arabic *la-* was a marker of "assertion." This places us in the realm of what the Jakobsonian structuralist approach to linguistic analysis has termed "status." This category was originally defined by Roman Jakobson (following Whorf) as the "logical quality" of the event.

... E.g., in Gilyak, the affirmative, presumptive, negative, interrogative, and negative-interrogative statuses are expressed by special verbal forms (Krejnovič). In English the assertive status uses the "do"-combinations which in certain combinations are optional for an affirmative assertion but compulsory for a negative or questioned assertion... [Jakobson 1971: 134]

Jakobson characterized status by means of the formula "*Eⁿ*"—i.e., "the narrated event itself without involving its participants and without reference to the speech event" (ibid.)—or, in other words, as a "non-shifter." Aronson (1991) notes, however, that, since examples such as *It does snow in May* clearly evidence "shifting" (in that the appearance of *does snow* rather than *snows* encodes factors inherent in the speech act, specifically in the attitude of the speaker), we cannot subsume such examples under the same category as such non-shifters as negation and interrogation. Aronson has consequently separated the shifting manifestations of Jakobson's "status" category from the non-shifting manifestations, in the process redefining "status," in the stricter sense, as *Eⁿ/P^s*, "the subjective evaluation of the narrated event by the speaker" (Aronson 1991: 114). Aronson also

takes Jakobson's "evidential" category ($E^n E^{ns}/E^s$)—the category through which a language encodes the source of the speaker's information about a narrated event—to be "closely related, or, better, a subvariety of STATUS (E^n/P^s)," perhaps as "a notional category arising as a contextual meaning of forms entering into an opposition of STATUS," at least in the well-known case of Bulgarian (Aronson 1991: 116-117).

It may be seen from the use of *la-* in the early Arabic corpus, as well as from the terms in which we find it discussed by the ancient grammarians, that this particle serves a function not far from that of elements like the English assertive *do* (e.g., *It does snow in May*), indicating a marked degree of conviction on the part of the speaker. Although the classic definition of status hinges on the speaker, however, the use of *la-* appears to revolve just as much around the addressee as around the speaker. The Qur'ānic corpus shows a clear predilection for the appearance of *la-* when the speaker is in the position of anticipating doubt (or at least a lack of commitment) on the part of his audience. We find, for example, that *la-* is seldom if ever used in the Qur'ān to modify a simple assertion of objective fact.³⁰ Rather, it is overwhelmingly associated with statements in which the truth asserted is a product of the speaker's evaluation or interpretation.

wa-la-'in ittaba'ta 'ahwā'ahum min ba'di mā jā'aka min al-'ilmi 'innaka 'iḍan la-min aḡ-ḡālimīna (II: 145) 'and *la-*if you pursue their desires, after the knowledge which has come to you, 'inna you are then *la-*of the wrongdoers.'

la-'amatun mu'minatun xayrun min mušrikatin wa-law 'a'jabatkum wa-la-'abdun mu'minun xayrun min mušrikin wa-law 'a'jabakum (II: 221) 'la-a believing handmaiden is better than an unbeliever, even if she pleases you, and *la-*a believing slave is better than an unbeliever, even if he pleases you'

'inna fī ḡālika *la-'ibratan li-'ūlī l-'abṣāri* (III: 13) "'inna in that [= the Muslim victory at Badr] (there is) *la-*a warning to those capable of seeing'

³⁰ A possible counterexample to this claim might be II: 74.

wa-'inna min al-hijāratī la-mā yatafajjaru minhū l-'anhāru wa-'inna minhā la-mā yaššaqqaqu fa-yaxruju minhū l-mā'u wa-'inna minhā la-mā yahbiṭu min xašyati llāhi... "'inna among rocks *la-*there are those from which rivers burst; and 'inna among them *la-*there are those which split open, and from which water emerges; and 'inna among them *la-*there are those which sink out of the fear of God...'

However, since this taxonomy of rocks presumably proceeds from hearsay or folk knowledge rather than from knowledge lying within the empirical experience of the addressee, we may assume the *la-* here is marking "facts" for which the addressee must rely upon the speaker for confirmation.

When *la-* is employed in a statement of objective fact, the context typically refers to a fact lying beyond the realm of normal human knowledge. Here the speaker seems to be laying claim to a source of information to which the interlocutor is not privy.

wa-la-qad iṣṭafaynāhu fī l-dunyā (II 130) ‘and *la-qad* We selected him [= the prophet ‘Ibrāhīm] in the world...’

wa-la-qad ‘arsalnā ‘ilā ‘umamin min qablika... (VI 42) ‘And *la-qad* We have sent (messengers) to nations before you...’

wa-la-qad xalaqnākum ḥumma ṣawwarnākum ḥumma qulnā li-l-malā’ikati (VII: 11) ‘And *la-qad* We created you, then We gave you shape, then We said to the angels...’

Judging by the use of *la-* in the Qur’ān, one of the more important aspects of the function of *la-* thus appears to be not only the encoding of the speaker’s assertion of the truth of his statement, but also, not infrequently, the underscoring of the epistemological distance separating him from his addressee. In this, *la-* seems to mean, “What I say is true, however difficult it may be for you to understand how it is true.”

Consider similarly the role of the *la-* prefixed to conditional constructions (*al-lām al-muwaṭṭi’a*) in establishing the connection between the two clauses of which the conditional is composed. For a significant number of the cases in the Qur’ānic corpus, the *lām al-muwaṭṭi’a* seems to be associated with an adversative relation between the “if” and the “then” clauses (Tietz 1963: 35-37). The particle *la-* is most likely to appear in situations in which the consequence runs counter to the natural implications of the protasis—i.e., constructions of the type *la-‘in ḍaraba-nī la-‘ukrimanna-hu* ‘(even) if he strikes me, I will honor him.’

wa-la-‘in ‘atayta llaḏīna ‘ūtū l-kitāba bi-kulli ‘āyatin mā tabi‘ū qiblataka (II: 145) ‘And *la-[even]* if you were to bring every sign to those to whom the Book was brought, they will not follow your Qibla’

wa-la-‘in qutiltum fī sabīli llāhi ‘aw muttum la-mayfiratun min allāhi wa-raḥmatun xayrun mim mā yajma‘ūna wa-la-‘in muttum ‘aw qutiltum la-‘ilā llāhi tuḥṣarūna (III: 157-158) ‘And *la-* [even] if you are slain on the path of God or die, *la-*forgiveness and mercy from God are better than what they amass. And *la-* [even] if you die or are slain, *la-*it is to God that you shall be gathered.’

la-‘in basaṭta ‘ilayya yadaka li-taqtulanī mā ‘anā bi-bāsiṭin yadiya ‘ilayka li-‘aqtulaka (V: 31) ‘*La-[even]* if you stretch forth your hand to slay me, I am not stretching forth my hand to slay you.’

la-‘in ijtama‘at il-‘insu wa-l-jinnu ‘alā ‘an ya-tū bimithli hādā l-qur’āni lā ya-tūna bimiṭlihi wa-law kāna ba‘ḍuhum liba‘ḍin ṣaḥīran (XVII: 88) ‘*La-[even]* if mankind and jinn were to get together in order to produce the like of this Qur’ān, they will not produce its like, not even if they were to assist one another.’

wa-la-'in 'arsalnā rīhan fa-ra'aw-hu muṣfarran la-ṣallū min ba'dihi yakfurūna (XXX: 51) 'And *la*-[even] if We send a wind, and they see it turning yellow, *la*-they continue to be unbelievers afterwards.'

A comparable relation may be observed in many of the '*inna*-clauses embedded within the commentary sections of the Qur'ān. In many of these passages, the presence of *la-* seems to underscore an adversative relation with the adjacent text. In contrast, such clauses which lack *la-* are most likely to reflect a causal relation with the neighboring lines, in that the material expressed in the '*inna*-clause normally follows logically.

'inna rabbaka sarī'u l-'iqābi wa-'innahu la-yaḥḥimūn (VI: 165) '*inna* your Lord is quick to punish, *but* He *la*-(is) merciful and compassionate.'

allaḍīna 'ātaynāhumu l-kitāba ya'rīfūnahu kamā ya'rīfūna 'abnā'ahum wa-'inna fariqan minhum la-yaktumūna l-haqqā wa-hum ya'lamūna (II: 146) 'Those to whom We have given the Book know it as they know their sons, *but* a faction of them *la*-knowingly conceal the truth.'

wa-lā tattabī'ū xuṭuwāti l-ṣayṭāni wa-'inna-hu lakum 'aduwwun mubīnun (II: 168) '...and do not follow the footsteps of al-Ṣayṭān, *for* he (**la*-)(is) a clear enemy to you.'

fa-man iḍḥurra ḡayra bāyīn wa-lā 'ādin fa-'inna rabbaka yaḥḥimūn (Q VI: 145) '... *but* if anyone is forced by necessity, without willing or transgressing, *then* your Lord (**la*-)(is) merciful and compassionate.'

The addition of *la-* thus serves to counteract the expectations engendered by the "natural" relations between the clauses (viz., "given X, one naturally expects Y").

Related to the use of *la-* in the environment of assessments and interpretations is its appearance in situations in which the ultimate veracity of the assertion is directly contingent upon the involvement of the speaker. These instances are primarily oaths functioning either as promises or threats, and typically they contain an energetic verb.

la-'in kaṣafta 'annā l-rizja la-nu'minanna laka wa-la-nursilanna ma'aka banī 'isrā'īla (VII: 134) '*la*-if you remove the penalty from us, *la*-we will believe in you, and *la*-we will send the Banū 'Isrā'īl with you '

fa-la-'uqaṭṭi'anna 'aydiyakum wa-'arjulakum min xilāfin wa-la-'uṣallibannakum fī juḍū'i l-naxli... (XX: 71) 'And *la*-I shall cut off your hands and feet on either side, and I shall crucify you on the trunks of palm trees...'

la-'in ṣakartum la-'azīdannakum... wa-la-'in kafartum 'inna 'aḍābī la-ṣādīdun (XIV: 7) '*la*-if you are grateful, *la*-I shall increase you... and *la*-if you are disbelievers, '*inna* My punishment *la*-(is) intense.'

Finally, we may note the frequent presence of *la-* in certain types of exclamatory utterances. As we saw in Chapter One, Ibn Hišām, citing such

sentences as *la-ṣarufa zaydun* ‘how charming Zayd is!’ observes that it is possible—but not necessary—to assume the existence of a special category of *lām al-ta‘ajjub* (“the *l* of wonder”). We find that *la-* is particularly well documented in conjunction with the two defective “verbs of praise and censure” (*fi‘lā l-madh wa-l-ḍamm*) *ni‘ma* ‘how good is..., what a good...!’ and *bi’sa* ‘how bad is..., what a bad...!’

wa-ma’wāhumu l-nāru wa-la-bi’sa l-maṣīru (XXIV: 57) ‘And their abode is the fire, and *la*-what an evil refuge it is!’

wa-la-dāru l-āxirati xayrun wa-la-ni‘ma dāru l-muttaqīna (XVI: 30) ‘And *la*-the abode of the next life is best, and *la*-how excellent is the abode of the righteous!’

It is worth comparing such admiring sentences to the types mentioned above, which are characterized by the epistemological disjunction between the speaker and the addressee. In a sense, we may think of the *la-* here as a marker indexing the speaker’s realization of the truth of the content of the utterance. Instead of an epistemological gulf separating a speaker from an addressee, we find here a gulf distinguishing a former, ignorant speaker from a new, comprehending speaker.

Although in general it may be said that *la-* does not occur in interrogative sentences, exclamations involving incredulity constitute the few counterexamples to this generalization.

‘a-’innakum la-taṣḥadūna ‘anna ma’a llāhi ‘ālihatan ‘uxrā (VI: 19) ‘*inna*-do you *la*-testify that alongside God there are other gods?’

‘a-’iḍā kunnā ‘iḍāman wa-rufātan ‘a-’innā la-mab’ūḥūna xalqan jadīdan (XVII: 49) ‘When we have become bones and dust, *‘inna*-are we *la*-to be raised up as a new creation?’

Dubitative exclamations of this sort constitute prime examples of status in the sense of the speaker’s editorializing upon the utterance. In a sense, what the speaker is questioning is not so much the content of the addressee’s utterance (the proposition ‘there are gods other than God’) but the fact of the addressee’s asserting it (‘do you really mean to say...?’).³¹

What all of the utterances involving *la-* appear to share is the direct involvement (in one form or another) of the speaker in conveying the veracity of the utterance. We have seen that this involvement may take the

³¹ Constructions such as these call to mind the close association which Aronson finds between the categories of status and evidentiality. Friedman (1975: 100) observes that dubitative exclamations typically take the form of a reference to a prior utterance, coupled with the speaker’s evaluation (derisive, contemptuous, sardonic, etc.) of that utterance. This differs from the typical instance of hearsay (e.g., *The steamer has left, they say*) in that in the case of dubitativity the speaker’s interlocutor is typically the source of the prior utterance (*What do you mean, ‘the steamer has left’!?*).

form of the speaker's personal vouching for the veracity of his utterance, or for his willingness to see that the content of the utterance is realized. In many cases *la-* seems to underscore the fact that, in epistemological terms, the speaker is in a better position to evaluate the veracity of the utterance than his interlocutor is. In certain cases (i.e., exclamations) it appears that *la-* serves to index the point at which the speaker himself comprehends the veracity of the content of his utterance.

It is curious to find that Qur'ānic *la-* is all but unknown in "witnessed" situations, which involve the speaker's empirical perception of objective reality, and might thus be thought of as the core of any category of "assertion." As we have seen, *la-* is much more familiar in the context of evaluations and conclusions. It is possible that, as a marker of assertion, *la-* is more compatible with situations lying beyond the realm of the strictly empirical, in which, in a sense, the major burden of conveying the assertion falls not upon the speaker but upon the objective world, the role of the speaker in the act of asserting being limited to that of a heuristic middleman ("I assert that X is so, because I have witnessed X"). *La-*, in contrast, seems to draw the speaker onto center stage personally, in the process attributing to him some form of insight by which he is distinguished as worthy of belief. This personal responsibility for the veracity of the assertion is particularly in evidence in the presence of an overt oath, of course, but we may also see its implied presence throughout the domain of *la-*.

2.5.1 *Some constraints on the appearance of la-*

As we have seen in the discussion of the traditional grammarians (Chapter One), the Arabic particle *la-* shows a clear predilection toward a specific set of syntactic environments. In the following sentence-types, *la-* was held to be either obligatory or extremely frequent.

In verbal (*fi'liyya*) sentences:

With *qad* + the past tense (*la-qad fa'ala*)

With the energetic future (*la-yaf'alanna*)

With "lightened" 'in ('in *kāna la-yaf'alu*)

In nominal (*ismiyya*) sentences:

With 'inna- ('inna-hu *la-yaf'alu*)

[With lightened 'in ('in *huwa la-fa'ala*)³²]

It is worth noting that two of the most basic and familiar sentence-types—the simple past *fa'ala* and the simple non-past *yaf'alu*—are systematically

³² As has been mentioned in Chapter One above, the grammarians disagreed as to whether lightened 'in was permitted in nominal sentences.

excluded from this list. As far as non-verbal sentences are concerned, the basic nominal type *la-zaydun karīmun*, while far from unknown, is conspicuously less frequent than one might expect, and the alternative order (*)*zaydun la-karīmun* is so vanishingly rare that it was a source of some consternation to the grammarians on those few occasions in which it is attested (e.g., *'ummu l-hulayṣi la-'ajūzun šahrabah*).

As long as we are considering *la-* solely from a functional point of view, these restrictions upon the appearance of *la-* remain mysterious. There would appear to be nothing inherently incompatible between these basic sentence-types and what we have taken to be the status-marking role of *la-* posited above, and hence nothing inherently untenable about a structure such as **la-yaf'alu* '(I assert that) he is doing.' One possible approach which one might select is to assign markers such as *qad*, *-an(na)*, and *'in(na)* to a general category of "emphasizers" to which *la-* also belongs, and posit that there is some form of distributional hierarchy governing the members of this category in such way that the presence of *la-* in, for example, a past-tense environment requires the concomitant presence of the emphaticizer *qad*. Such a view might thus suggest that *la-* provides Arabic with a second degree of "emphaticness" lying beyond what is provided by the other, more basic emphasizing elements.³³

Table 10: The structures associated with *la-*
View 1—Multiple grades of "emphaticness"

| | Ø-Emphatic | + Emphatic | "++ Emphatic" |
|---------|---------------------|-------------------------|----------------------------|
| Past | <i>fa'ala</i> | <i>qad fa'ala</i> | <i>la-qad fa'ala</i> |
| Future | <i>(sa-)yaf'alu</i> | <i>yaf'alanna</i> | <i>la-yaf'alanna</i> |
| Nominal | <i>huwa karīmun</i> | <i>'inna-hu karīmun</i> | <i>'inna-hu la-karīmun</i> |

However, Arabic provides us with few empirical grounds to regard a sentence containing both *la-* and one of these markers as significantly more "emphatic" than a sentence with any of the remaining emphaticizers alone. Indeed, in the case of the two verbal sentence-types cited above (i.e., *qad* + the past-tense verb and the energetic verb), we have reason to believe that no such opposition exists (at least directly) between sentences with and without *la-*. Several of the grammarians have stated explicitly that in older Arabic *yaf'alanna* was not allowed without *la-*, making it difficult to maintain that there could have been any significant contrast between (*)*yaf'alanna* and *la-yaf'alanna*. Likewise, we have seen that whatever emphatic function *qad* alone may have played in early Arabic was evidently

³³ The notion that sentences containing both *la-* and another emphaticizer are inherently more "emphatic" than those without *la-* is taken for granted in, e.g., Nebes' conjectures on the development of *'in... la-...* (Nebes 1987).

secondary to its primary role (whether that role was the expression of aspect, as suggested above, or of some other category), and the distinction between *qad fa'ala* 'he has done' and *la-qad fa'ala* 'he surely did,' etc., can hardly be taken to be primarily a matter of relative degrees of emphasis.

In light of the non-existence of the construction **la-fa'ala*, we find no reason to take *la-qad fa'ala* to be anything other than the "emphatic" counterpart to the simple, non-"emphatic" *fa'ala*, rather than to the (aspectually?) marked *qad fa'ala*. Similarly, if we are correct in taking *'inna* to be specifically a marker of affirmation rather than of status, we again find that we have no reason to believe that *'inna... la-...* represents any heightened degree of emphasis *vis-à-vis* a simple emphatic *'inna*. All of this implies that the various elements in these constructions—viz. *'in(na)*, *qad*, and perhaps *-an(na)*—as they occur in these constructions are not of themselves emphasers in the same sense that *la-* is an emphasizer, but rather are ancillary phenomena, the presence of which is necessary in order for the *la*-constructions to be properly realized.

Table 11: The structures associated with *la-*
View 2—Structures involved in the realization of *la-*

| - ASSERTION | (* + ASSERTION) | REALIZATION |
|---------------------|------------------------------|----------------------------|
| <i>fa'ala</i> | <i>*la- + fa'ala →</i> | <i>la-qad fa'ala</i> |
| <i>(sa-)yaf'alu</i> | <i>*la- + (sa-)yaf'alu →</i> | <i>la-yaf'alanna</i> |
| <i>huwa karimun</i> | <i>*la- + huwa karimun →</i> | <i>'inna-hu la-karimun</i> |

From this point of view, the elements *qad* and *'inna* in these constructions would in a sense be serving as little more than props allowing the particle *la-* to manifest itself, and thus would be playing little or no functional role—in contrast to their other environments, in which they appear as the primary exponents of their respective categories (i.e., aspect in *qad fa'ala* vs. *fa'ala*, affirmation in *'inna zaydan karimun* vs. *zaydun karimun*).

Let us consider the situation of the simple verbal sentence-types *fa'ala* and *yaf'alu*. As we have seen, *la-* is essentially not permitted with the basic, unmarked past and non-past constructions (**la-fa'ala*, **la-yaf'alu*), but it occurs freely in the presence of *qad* and the energetic verbs (*la-qad fa'ala*, *la-yaf'alanna*). It is interesting to note that there is a phonological factor which correlates with this distribution, although this factor is not immediately apparent and its significance may be not at all clear at first glance.

It has been proposed elsewhere (Testen 1993) that the energetic suffixes *-an(na)* of Arabic are ultimately to be traced back (in formal terms) to a set of Proto-Semitic endings which are most clearly reflected in the so-called "ventive" suffixes of Akkadian, *-am/-nim*. Consider the following paradigm for the preterite of the Akkadian verb *parāsu(m)* 'divide' (in the Assyrian dialect), with and without the ventive suffixes.

Table 12: The ventive suffixes of Akkadian

| | + Ventive | | - Ventive |
|-------------|-----------------|------------|----------------|
| 1 Sg. | <i>aprus-</i> | <i>am</i> | <i>aprus</i> |
| 2 Masc. Sg. | <i>taprus-</i> | <i>am</i> | <i>taprus</i> |
| 2 Fem. Sg. | <i>taprusi-</i> | <i>m</i> | <i>taprusī</i> |
| 3 Masc. Sg. | <i>iprus-</i> | <i>am</i> | <i>iprus</i> |
| 3 Fem. Sg. | <i>taprus-</i> | <i>am</i> | <i>taprus</i> |
| 1 Pl. | <i>niprus-</i> | <i>am</i> | <i>niprus</i> |
| 2 Pl. | <i>taprusā-</i> | <i>nim</i> | <i>taprusā</i> |
| 3 Masc. Pl. | <i>iprusū-</i> | <i>nim</i> | <i>iprusū</i> |
| 3 Fem. Pl. | <i>iprusā-</i> | <i>nim</i> | <i>iprusā</i> |

Since in the phonological prehistory of Arabic a general shift of word-final **-m* > *-n* took place (cf., e.g., Arabic *kalbun* ‘a dog’ vs. Akkadian *kalbum*), we expect to find that an early Semitic ending **-am*/**-nim* would have taken the shape **-an*/**-nin* at the earliest stage of Arabic.³⁴ The new sequence **-nin* < **-nim*, however, would have been subject to the same syncope rule that elsewhere produced geminate consonants out of sequences consisting of identical consonants separated by a short vowel ($-C_1C_1-$ < $*C_1VC_1-$)—cf. *radd-a* rather than **radad-a*, *yarudd-u* rather than **yardudu*. We would expect, therefore, that the Arabic counterpart to the Akkadian ventive endings *-am*/*-nim* would have appeared as **-an*/**-nn*. The energetic forms observed in attested Arabic may therefore be interpreted as cognates to the “ventive” endings if we assume (a) the introduction of a supporting final vowel after the word-final **-nn* (like the vowel seen in jussive *yarudd-a* ← **yarudd-Ø*), and (b) the loss of the original distribution of **-nim* (after long-vowel endings) vs. **-am* (elsewhere), with the result that the “lightened” and heavy forms of the energetic endings have come to occur in free variation.

| *Proto-Semitic | <i>*-m</i> > <i>-n</i> | Syncope | <i>*-nnV</i> | Literary Arabic |
|------------------------|------------------------|--------------|----------------|---|
| <i>*(yip'al)-am</i> | <i>*-an</i> | --- | --- | <i>yaf'alan/yaf'alun</i> (“lightened”) ~ |
| <i>*(yip'al)-ū-nim</i> | <i>*-ū-nin</i> | <i>*-ūnn</i> | <i>*-ūnn-a</i> | <i>yaf'alanna/yaf'alunna</i> (“heavy”) |

The history of the energetic endings is relevant to the present topic in that we see that the final vowel of *yaf'al-anna* is secondary. Recognizing this

³⁴ We find a fairly clear reflection of a counterpart to this earlier stage of Arabic in the Epigraphic South Arabian language Sabaean. Here the third-person endings of the *n*-suffixes take the shape *-n* (singular) vs. *-nn* (plural), the latter of which must have had a vowel separating the two *n*'s (Testen 1993a).

allows us to phrase our interpretation of the distribution of *la-* in verbal sentences to state that *la-* occurs prefixed to elements which end in an original consonant (*la-qad*, *la-yaf'al-an/la-yaf'al-ann-*) and does not occur prefixed to elements ending in a vowel (**la-fa'ala*, **la-yaf'al-u*), in light of the fact that the two basic tenses (the past and the indicative non-past) are overwhelmingly characterized by vowel-final shapes.³⁵

From this perspective, let us contrast the past-tense structures *la-qad...* and *'in... la-...*, which, as Nebes has pointed out, appear to have been functional counterparts, in one sense or another, in early Arabic. If we are correct in taking the particle *'in(na)* to have originally been extraneous to the clause proper (see the discussion of *enma/umma* above), we find that the location of *la-* within these two constructions may be correlated with the nature of final segment of the first element of the clause, much as we seem to find in the simple verbal sentence-types: *la-* is placed before the consonant-final *qad*, but it follows the vowel-final past-tense verb.

| | [Clause-Element-1 | | Clause-Element-2... |] |
|-------------|-------------------|------------|---------------------|---|
| <i>la-</i> | [<i>qad</i> | | <i>fa'ala...</i> | |
| <i>'in:</i> | [<i>kāna</i> | <i>la-</i> | <i>yaf'alu...</i> |] |

We thus find here a pattern analogous to that noted above for the simple verbal sentences: in clause-initial position, *la-* is restricted to those elements that end in a consonant.³⁶

³⁵ Cf. the following paradigms for the past tense and the non-past tense, respectively:

| | Singular | | Dual | | Plural | |
|---------|----------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|-------------------|------------------|
| 1 | <i>fa'altu</i> | <i>'af'alu</i> | | | <i>fa'alnā</i> | <i>naf'alu</i> |
| 2 Masc. | <i>fa'alta</i> | <i>taf'alu</i> | <i>fa'altumā</i> | <i>taf'alāni</i> | <i>fa'altum</i> | <i>taf'alūna</i> |
| 2 Fem. | <i>fa'alti</i> | <i>taf'alīna</i> | | | <i>fa'altunna</i> | <i>taf'alna</i> |
| 3 Masc. | <i>fa'ala</i> | <i>yaf'alu</i> | <i>fa'alā</i> | <i>yaf'alāni</i> | <i>fa'alū</i> | <i>yaf'alūna</i> |
| 3 Fem. | <i>fa'alat</i> | <i>taf'alu</i> | <i>fa'alatā</i> | | <i>fa'alna</i> | <i>yaf'alna</i> |

The sole exception to the generalization lies in the third-person singular feminine past ending *-at*. In the second-person masculine plural of the past, the final consonant is secondary, the result of the loss of the final vowel of an original **-tumū* (cf., with an object-suffix, *fa'altumū-hū* 'you (masc. pl.) did it').

³⁶ The interpretation of Arabic *'in(na)* as lying "outside" of the clause (in terms of its relevance to the placement of *la-*) is reminiscent of the "extraclausal" particles of Sanskrit such as *atha* and *tatas*, which similarly are not counted as part of their clause for the purpose of determining the placement of clitic elements. Cf. examples such as the following, in which the particle *u*, which normally occurs in the second position in its clause, is preceded by both *atha* and *kim* (SB 1.1.1.8, cited by Schäufele 1991: 158):

atha kim u yaḥ deveṣu anaśṭatsu pūrvah aśniyāt
 now what PART. who (m.sg.) gods not eating (loc.) first (m.sg.) eat (3 sg. opt.)
 'But what if he should eat first, with the gods not eating?'

There is a possibility that we find traces of a comparable pattern in nominal (*ismiyya*) sentences. In such sentences we see a systematic distinction between “vowel-final” and “consonant-final” elements, in that such a contrast is built into the morphology of the contrast between determined and non-determined substantives—contrast consonant-final *rajul-un* ‘a man (nom.)’ and vowel-final *al-rajul-u* ‘the man (nom.),’ *rijāl-un* ‘men (nom.)’ and *al-rijāl-u* ‘the men (nom.).’³⁷ Of the limited number of instances of *al-lām al-mubtada*’ preceding a substantive in the Qur’ān, a conspicuous number contain an indefinite *mubtada*’, which, by virtue of the triptotic indefinite ending *-n*, is consonant-final.

wa-la-’amatun mu’minatun xayrun min mušrikatin ... wa-la-’abdun mu’minun xayrun min mušrikin... (II: 221) ‘And *la-a* believing handmaiden is better than a polytheist... and *la-a* believing slave is better than a polytheist...’

la-mayfiratun min allāhi wa-rahmatun xayrun mimmā taḥṣarūna (III: 157) ‘(If you are martyred) *la*-forgiveness from God and mercy are better than what you are accumulating’

la-masjidun ’ussisa ’alā l-taqwā min ’awwali yawmin ’aḥaqqu ’an taqūma fīhi (IX: 108) ‘*la*-A mosque founded on piety from the very beginning—it is more fitting that you stand in it.’

In a further pair of passages, the *mubtada*’ is notionally definite, but nonetheless, for reasons of morphology, ends in a consonant.

la-yūsufun wa-’axūhū ’aḥabbu ’ilā ’abīnā minnā (XII: 8) ‘*la*-Yūsuf and his brother are dearer to our father than we are.’

la-’antum ’ašaddu rahbatan fī ṣudūrihim min allāhi (LIX: 13) ‘*la*-you (m. pl.) are a greater source of dread for them than God is.’

A further, extra-Qur’ānic example linking *la-* with an indefinite noun is Imru’ al-Qays’s line *la-laylun bi-ḍāti l-ṭalḥi ’inda muḥajjirin ’aḥabbu ’ilaynā min layālīn ’alā wuqurīn* (17, 3) ‘*la*-a night among the acacias with Muḥajjir is dearer to us than nights of tranquillity.’ The prefixation of *la-* is in fact one of the few situations in Arabic in which an indefinite noun serving as the subject is allowed to remain in initial position, rather than being shifted to the end of the clause (contrast, e.g., *fī l-dāri rajulun* ‘in

³⁷ This is a simplification, of course. The distinction between “consonant-final” and “vowel-final” is not reflected, for example, in strong masculine plural substantives—cf. *kātibūna* ‘writing ones (m.)’ vs. determined *al-kātibūna*—nor is it found among diptotic nouns, which are consistently vowel-final—e.g., ‘*akbaru*’ ‘greatest’ vs. *al-’akbaru*. Nevertheless, an opposition between non-determined consonant-final forms and determined vowel-final forms is a very familiar phenomenon in Arabic nominal morphology.

the house (there is) a man').³⁸ It thus appears quite possible that sentences of the type *la-masjidun... xayrun...* reflect the same curious restriction that we find in verbal sentences: *la-* was allowed in initial position when it preceded an element ending in a consonant.

A reflection of the same generalization may be seen among conditional clauses. Initial *la-* is not documented for clauses beginning with vowel-final *law* or *lawlā* (i.e., **la-law*, **la-lawlā*), but it is entirely familiar for those marked with the consonant-final *'in* (*la-'in*). Moreover, conditional-like clauses containing *man* 'whoever' likewise follow this pattern.

la-man tabi'a-ka minhum la-'amla'anna jahannama minkum 'ajma'ina (VII: 18) 'la-whoever of them follows you, la-I shall fill Jahannam with you all.'

wa-la-man intaşara ba'da şulmihi fa-'ulā'ika mā 'alayhim min sabālin... wa-la-man şabara wa-şafara 'inna dālika la-min 'azmi l-'umūri (XLII: 41-43)... 'and la-whoever defend themselves after being wronged, there is no path against them... and whoever is patient and forgives, that is great-spiritedness in affairs...'

The pattern which we find associating the presence of sentence-initial *la-* with a consonant-final word finds its complement in the more limited number of cases in which *la-* occurs inside its clause rather than at the clauses's onset. Despite the grammarians' judgments about the normal behavior of *la-*, we find that the corpus of early Arabic reveals isolated attestations of *la-* in sentence-internal position. Such constructions are not found in the Qur'ān, but they do occur sporadically in early poetry.

'ummu l-hulayşi la-'ajūzun şahrabah 'Umm al-Hulayş *la-*(is) an old woman, a *şahraba*'

³⁸ Of the remaining instances of *al-lām al-mubtada'* in the Qur'ān, it is perhaps significant that most of them involve a *mubtada'* featuring the term *al-'āxirat* 'the Next (World)'—cf. *la-'ajru l-'āxirati* 'la-the reward of the Next (World)...' (XII: 57, XVI: 41); *la-dāru l-'āxirati* 'la-the abode of the Next (World)...' (XII: 109, XVI: 30,); *la-'adābu l-'āxirati* 'la-the punishment of the Next (World)...' (XVIII: 127, XXXIX: 26, XLI: 16); *la-l-'āxiratu...* 'la-the Next (World)...' (XCIII: 3). Presumably *la-l-dāru l-'āxiratu...* 'la-the next abode...' (VI: 32) is to be related to this set (cf. *la-dāru l-'āxirati* above). Perhaps *al-'āxirat* was regarded in some sense as a proper noun, and thus followed different principles. The remaining instances of *lām al-mubtada'* in the Qur'ān are *la-şahādatunā...* 'la-our testimony...' (V: 110) and *la-xalqu l-samāwāti wa-l-'arḍi...* 'la-the creation of the heavens and the earth...' (XL: 57). In later Arabic *la-* before the article occurs much more frequently—cf. *wa-la-l-şabru 'in lam yanfa'i l-şakwu 'ajmalu* (Şanfarā Lām. 34).

xālī la-'anta wa-man jarīrun

xāluhu

My maternal uncle *la-*(are) you!
And he whose maternal uncle
is Jarīr

yanal il-'alā'a wa-yukrim

il-'axwālā

Attains high rank, and honors
his maternal uncles!³⁹

Note that *la-* in these residual structures typically follows a vowel-final clause-initial element (*'ummu l-ḥulayṣi...*, *xālī...*), in contrast to the pattern of the type *la-masjidun...* This suggests that, at an early stage of Arabic, the distribution of *la-* in nominal sentences may have been governed by the same phonological principle described above in the discussion of *la-qad...* and *'in... la-...* : when the first element of the clause ($[X^1 \dots]$) ended in a vowel, the *la-* (or better, its historical prototype) was placed between $*X^1$ and the following word (hence $*[X^1 \text{ } la\text{-}X^2 \dots]$), but when $*X^1$ ended in a consonant the proto-*la-* preceded $*X^1$ (hence $*[la\text{-}X^1 \dots]$). Although *la-* in the clause-initial was maintained quite robustly into early historical Arabic, it was largely lost when it was located outside of that position.

| *Pre-Arabic | | | | Historical Arabic | |
|---------------|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------|---|---------------------------|--|
| $*\emptyset-$ | $[X^1 \text{ } la\text{-} X^2 \dots]$ | (where $X^1 = *-\text{V}\#$) | > | $X^1 ((?)la\text{-}) X^2$ | |
| $*la-$ | $[X^1 \emptyset\text{-}X^2 \dots]$ | (where $X^1 = *-\text{C}\#$) | > | $la\text{-}X^1 X^2$ | |

The sentence-internal *la-* has survived only in a few syntagms.⁴⁰ One such syntagm is the type of *'in... la-....* It may be conjectured that structures resulting from the original pattern $*X^1 \text{ } la\text{-}X^2 \dots$ have been replaced by *'in* $X^1 \text{ } la\text{-}X^2$ by means of a general prefixation of the particle *'in*. Even given the limited attestation of the *'in... la-....* type, the breadth of syntactic heterogeneity to be found across these sentences is remarkable. This makes it likely that we should think of the *'in... la-....* type not as a single original construction but rather as a secondary phenomenon superimposed upon a number of general structural types.

³⁹ Anonymous, cited by Ibn Mañṣūr (s.v. *ṣhrb*).

⁴⁰ In addition, that is, to frozen fossils such as *'ummu l-ḥulayṣi la-'ajūzun ...* mentioned above.

Table 13: Structural heterogeneity of constructions containing “lightened” *'in*

| $X^1 + X^2 =$ | |
|---------------------------------|---|
| Copula + Predicate: | <i>'in kunnā la-mubtalīna</i> (XXIII: 30) <i>'in</i> we were <i>la-</i> put to the test' |
| Verb + Subject | <i>'in tazīnuka la-nafsuka wa-'in tazīnuka la-hiya</i> ⁴¹ <i>'in</i> adorns you <i>la-</i> your soul, and <i>'in-mars</i> you <i>la-</i> it' |
| <i>fi'l al-qalb</i> + Predicate | <i>'in naḡunnuka la-mina l-kāḡibīna</i> (XXVI: 186) <i>'in</i> we consider you <i>la-</i> (to be) of the liars' |
| Verb + Direct object | <i>'in qatalta la-musliman</i> ('Atika bt. Zayd) <i>'in</i> you slew <i>la-</i> a Muslim' |
| Auxiliary verb + Finite verb | <i>'in kānū la-yaqūlūna</i> (XXXVII: 167) <i>'in</i> they used to <i>la-</i> say...' |
| | <i>in kādū la-yastafizzūnaka min al-'arḡi</i> (XVII: 76) <i>'in</i> they all but <i>la-</i> drove you from the land...' |
| Verb + Prep. phrase | <i>'in kunnā la-fi ḡalālīn mubīnin</i> (XXVI: 97) <i>'in</i> we were <i>la-</i> in obvious wandering!' |

We may conjecture that, in sentence-internal position, *la-* has ceased to be a freely occurring element, coming instead to be bound with *'in* in the attested *'in... la-...* syntagm(s). As the “emphatic” counterpart to the typical past-tense clause, we find the generalization of the aspect-marker *qad*, which (as a consonant-final element) caused the *la-* to be placed automatically into the clause-initial position.⁴² In the case of those clauses which were incompatible with the perfectivizer *qad* on account of their intrinsic non-perfective aspectual marking—i.e., those containing such inherently non-completed elements as *kāna yaḡ'alu* ‘was doing’ and *kāda* ‘he all but...’⁴³—it appears that *la-* occurred in clause-second position (i.e., following the vowel-final verb), but that a subsequent development prefixed the (originally extra-clausal) affirmation-marker *'in* to the entire complex.

⁴¹ Cited by al-Zamaxṣārī, *al-Mufaṣṣal* p. 138. Rabin (1951: 171), however, recommends reading **'in yazīnuka 'illā naḡsuka...* ‘Only your soul adorns you...’

⁴² As we have seen, a by-product of this generalization of the element *qad* is the erasing of the distinction between “+ perfective” (*qad fa'ala*) and “+perfective” (*fa'ala*) in the environment of *la-*.

⁴³ In addition to sentences with *kāna* and *kāda*, in the Qur'ān the *'in... la-...* construction is also found twice with “verbs of the heart”—*wa-'in wajadnā 'akṡarahum la-fāṣiqīna* (VII: 107) ‘and *'in* We found *la-*most of them (to be) corrupters’ and *wa-'in naḡunnuka la-min al-kāḡibīna* (XXVI: 186) ‘and *'in* We regard you *la-*(as one) of the unbelievers.’ Might the absence of *la-qad* here be related to the aspectual ramifications of the predication (‘they are corrupters,’ ‘you are of the unbelievers’) rather than of the verb? Compare the comments above concerning the absence of *qad* in sentences such as *wallāhi la-māta 'abdu l-raḡmāni wa-'inna ra'sahu la-'alā faxiḡi* ‘By God, ‘Abd al-Raḡmān died with his head on my lap.’

Table 14: Development of *la-qad...* and *'in... la...* constructions

| | | - Asseverative | | + Asseverative | |
|--------------|---------|-----------------------|-----------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|
| | | + Completive | - Compl. | + Completive | - Compl. |
| Stage *I | - Perf. | <i>*fa'ala...</i> | <i>*kāna...</i> | <i>*fa'ala la-...</i> | <i>*kāna la-...</i> |
| | + Perf. | <i>*qad fa'ala...</i> | --- | <i>*la-qad fa'ala...</i> | --- |
| Stage *II | - Perf. | <i>*fa'ala...</i> | <i>*kāna...</i> | <i>*la-qad</i> | <i>*kāna la-...</i> |
| | + Perf. | <i>*qad fa'ala...</i> | --- | <i>fa'ala...</i> | --- |
| Stage III | - Perf. | <i>fa'ala...</i> | <i>kāna...</i> | <i>la-qad</i> | <i>'in [kāna la-]</i> |
| | + Perf. | <i>qad fa'ala...</i> | --- | <i>fa'ala...</i> | --- |

The end result of these developments has been that, in medial position, *la-* no longer occurs freely in historical Arabic but has been bound into a restricted set of formulaic syntagms.

2.5.2 Sura XX: 63

It is worth briefly reflecting upon a long-standing textual puzzle from this perspective. It has been posited above that the *'in... la...* construction of Classical Arabic is a secondary development formed by the superimposing of a prefixed *'in* onto a structure in which *la-* was originally in clause-second position—i.e., (1) $[X^1 \text{ la-} X^2] > (2) 'in [X^1 \text{ la-} X^2]$, where “X¹” ends in a vowel. It is conceivable that the historically secondary nature of *'in* is responsible for the curious Qur'ānic passage XX: 63.

'in hāḍāni la-sāḥirāni ‘*in these two la-(are) sorcerers*’

It has been claimed by at least certain of the grammarians that *'in... la...* is found only with verbal sentences, while nominal sentences took the corresponding “heavy” *'inna*. Since the writing system generally makes no distinction between *'in* and *'inna*, the passage in question has been widely read as *'inna*. Such a reading leads to an immediately obvious problem, however, since *'inna* normally governs the accusative, and one thus expects to find the form **hāḍayni* rather than the nominative *hāḍāni*. As a result, a number of readings for this passage, coupled with diverse grammatical parsings, have developed, as Burton (1988: 11-12) observes.

Without wishing to imply that the complex problem of XX: 63 may be easily resolved satisfactorily, we may take note of the fact that, by our understanding of the history of the syntax of this construction, the nominative morphology of *hāḍāni* corresponds to what we would expect to have been the original shape (**hāḍāni la-sāḥirāni*). Whether <'n> is to be read as *'in* or as *'inna*, it is conceivable that we have here a fossil of the original shape underlying this pattern, which has been erased in standard Literary Arabic by the general shifting of substantives governed by *'inna* into the accusative case, and by the general loss of *'in* with anything other than a following verb. If nothing else, XX: 63 serves as a reminder that we

are not entitled to assume identity between the grammar of the earliest Arabic and that of the Arabic of the grammarians.

2.5.3 *The location of la- in complex syntactic structures*

Up to this point, we have gotten the impression that, in principle, the original location of *la-* may be described as a fairly simple pattern: *la-* occurred either (a) in clause-initial position (when the first element of the clause originally ended in a consonant), or (b) in the second position in the clause (when that element originally ended in a vowel). We see that this generalization covers a good number of the instances of *la-* in the Qur'ān. However, the rules governing the placement of *la-* become more complicated as the constructions themselves become more complicated.

It is quite frequent in *'inna* clauses to find a *la-* located at a considerable distance from the beginning of the clause. For the majority of such cases, we may characterize the data by saying that the same principle has applied to these more complicated structures, in the sense that *la-* has been inserted between the first and second elements of the structure, but the X^1 upon which the rule is based is not a single word but rather a larger syntactic constituent—i.e., most frequently, the noun phrase which serves as the *ism 'inna*. When we find *la-* added to a structure consisting of *'inna* + NP + S, the *la-* is invariably inserted between the noun phrase and the clause.

'inna llaḏīna 'ūtū l-kitāba la-ya'lamūna 'annahu l-ḥaqqu min rabbihim (II: 144) '*inna* [(NP=) those to whom the Book has been brought] *la-* [(S=) they know that it is the truth from their Lord]'
wa-'inna fariqan minhum la-yaktumūna l-ḥaqqa (II: 146) 'and '*inna* [(NP=) a faction of them] *la-*[(S=) they conceal the truth]'

When we find a more complex structure consisting of a pair of clauses, on the other hand, we find the first clause serving as the X^1 , with the *la-* consequently interposed between the two clauses—[[S^1] *la-*[S^2]].

law kāna fī l-'arḍi malā'ikatun yamšūna muṭma'innīna la-nazzalnā 'alayhim min al-samā'i mal'akan rasūlan (XVII: 95) '[If there were angels walking the earth in peace] *la-*[We would send down to them from heaven an angel as apostle]'
'a-'idā mā mittu la-sawfa 'uxraju ḥayyan (XIX: 16) '[When I die] *la-*[shall I be brought out alive?]'

Constructions such as these led Kinberg (1985) to conclude that the primary function of *la-* is to serve as "a particle marking the comment after a topic in front extraposition," at least after oaths (Kinberg 1985: 354). Such a view accords well enough with sentences of the type mentioned above (*'inna* + NP + *la-*[S], where [S] may plausibly be described as a "comment"), and may also be said to agree with what is seen in *'inna-*

sentences containing an indefinite *ism* 'inna which has undergone *al-ta'xīr* (movement to the end of the clause).

'inna min 'ahli l-kitābi la-man yu'minu bi-llāhi wa-mā 'unzila 'ilaykum
(III: 199) 'inna [(PrepP=) of the People of the Book] (is) la-[(NP=)
whoever believes in God and what has been sent down to you]
'inna fī ḍālika la-'āyātun li-qawmin yu'minūna (VI: 99) 'inna [(PrepP=)
in that] (there are) la-[(NP=) signs for a people who believe]'

In such sentences, the "X1" constituent is not the subject noun phrase but a prepositional phrase. The topic-comment structure of the sentence remains the same as that of the "NP + [S]"-type, however.

Table 15: Topic-comment structure of the 'inna-construction

| | | Topic | | Comment |
|---------------|-------|--|-----|--|
| PrepP + NP | 'inna | fī ḍālika 'in that...' | la- | 'āyātun li-qawmin yu'minūna '(there are) signs for people who believe' |
| NP + [S] | | farīqan minhum 'a faction of them...' | | yaktumūna l-ḥaqqā 'they conceal the truth' |

However, since the same topic-comment structure is found in such sentence-structures even in the absence of *la-*, it is difficult to maintain that *la-* plays a key role in the identifying of the comment. Kinberg grants, moreover, that there are numerous situations in which the location of *la-* cannot readily be related to the topic-comment structure of its clause, but he nonetheless maintains that *la-* should be assigned the basic function of a comment-marker.

The fact that *la-* is often attested in initial position raises the question of the position of this particle within the sentence. The Arab grammarians often regard this *la-* as 'the inchoative *la-*' (*lām al-ibtidā'*). Consequently, they have difficulties in explaining its frequent occurrence in a non-initial position. Our conception of *la-* as a comment marker resolves these difficulties. As for the cases in which *la-* does occur initially, we would assume a preceding oath in the deep structure, so that *la-* introduces the complement of a deleted oath. This presentation is often offered by the Arab grammarians themselves when they explain the occurrence of *la-* in sentences beginning by *la-qad* [Kinberg 1985: 401]⁴⁴

Nonetheless, it is unlikely that we are entitled to follow Kinberg in interpreting *la-* as a marker of the comment in such structures. The marking

⁴⁴ While it may be argued that the grammarians had a fair amount of justification for positing an underlying oath, it is not certain that positing such an oath would provide a covert "topic" of the sort needed by Kinberg.

of the comment cannot be regarded as the primary function of *la-* as long as the specific position of *la-* within these sentences simply seems to reflect a juncture between major syntactic constituents. For *'inna*-sentences, we may predict the location of *la-* by the following statements:

- (1) If the *xabar* is a complete, independent clause (i.e., *'inna* + NP + [S]), the *la-* will be prefixed to that clause (*'inna* + NP + *la*-[S]).
- (2) If the *'inna* is followed by a simple *ismiyya* clause (i.e., if the *xabar* is not a full clause but a noun phrase, adjective phrase, or prepositional phrase serving as the predicate of the *ism 'inna*), then the *la-* will fall either...
 - (a) if the *xabar* consists of one constituent, *la-* will typically fall between the first and second constituents, whether the first is a substantive phrase (*'inna zaydan la-karīmun*) or a prepositional phrase (*'inna fī l-bayti la-rajulun*);
 - (b) if the *xabar* consists of more than one constituent, the *la-* will fall before the final constituent of the sentence—e.g., *'inna kaθīran min al-nāsi 'an 'āyātīnā la-ḡāfilūna* (X: 92) *'inna* many of the people about Our signs (are) *la*-ignorant.'

The last construction (2b) appears to result from the shifting of material into clause-final position, for the purpose of highlighting new information. Sura X: 92 is thus the focused counterpart to an unshifted structure **'inna kaθīran min al-nāsi la-ḡāfilūna 'an 'āyātīnā*. Examples of similar constructions are the following:

'inna rabbaka min ba'dihā la-ḡafūrun raḥīmun (XVI: 110) *'inna* your Lord after these things *la*-(is) forgiving, compassionate'
wa-'inna llāha 'alā naṣrihim la-qadīrun (XXII: 39) *'and 'inna* God of aiding them *la*-(is) capable'

The displaced *la-* may likewise be found in sentences containing a lightened *'in*.

wa-'in kunta min qablihi la-min al-ḡāfilīna (XII: 3) *'and 'in* you were prior to this *la*-of the ignorant'

Note, however, that *la-* will only follow the shifted material if the *xabar* of an *'inna*-sentence consists of less than a full clause [S]. If an independent clausal *xabar* is present, *la-* maintains its position prefixed to the entire [S], as we find in XVI: 124.

wa-'inna rabbaka la-yahkumu baynahum yawma l-qiyāmati fīmā kānū fihi yaxtalifūna *'and 'inna* your Lord *la*-[He judges between them on the Day of the Resurrection concerning that on which they used to disagree]'

As has been pointed out above, *la-* may only appear outside of the position directly following *X¹* (where *X¹* = the first constituent phrase of the clause)

when we have a simple⁴⁵ verbless clause, and the *la-* is thus located within a clause rather than between clauses. I consequently suggest that the set of generalizations given above may be rephrased to state that, in the environment of *'inna*, the *la-* is placed not *after* the *first* element but *before* the *final* constituent. Since in most cases an *'inna*-sentence will consist of only two constituents (i.e., the *ism 'inna* followed by a *xabar*, whether the latter consists of a clause or of a (nominal, adjectival, or prepositional) phrase), the position following the X^1 is typically identical to the position preceding the final element.

| X^1 | | X^2 | $X^2 =$ |
|-----------------|-----|------------------|--|
| 'inna zaydan | la- | yaḍribuhu 'abūhu | 'inna Zayd la-his father beats him [S] |
| | | muslimun | 'inna Zayd la-(is) a Muslim NP |
| | | karīmun | 'inna Zayd la-(is) noble AdjP |
| | | fī l-bayti | 'inna Zayd la-(is) in the house PrepP |

This is the structure of an example like XI: 87, *'innaka la-'anta l-ḥalīmu l-rašīdu* '*inna*-you *la-* [(S =) you are the patient one, the upright one],' as far as *la-* is concerned: since *'anta l-ḥalīmu l-rašīdu* is a full clause, we find that *la-* is prefixed to the *xabar* as a whole, rather than inserted into the clause (i.e., **'inna-ka* [*'anta la-l-ḥalīmu...*] appears to be impossible).⁴⁶ In contrast, when there is no such clausal boundary, and when an element of the *xabar* has been extracted for focus reasons and placed at the end of the clause, the *la-* will be attracted to the position preceding the element shifted into final position— $X^1 X^2 la-(X^3)$.

| X^1 | X^2 | (X^3) |
|---|---------------------------------|----------------------------|
| 'inna kaḥīran min al-nāsi 'inna many of the people | 'an 'āyātīnā about Our signs | la-ḡāfilūna la-ignorant |

2.5.4 Summary of the location of *la-*

I have attempted to demonstrate above that the position of *la-* within any given sentence is governed by structural (i.e., syntactic and, at least at the earlier stage of the language, phonological) concerns, rather than by meaning. In simple sentences of the basic types "verb+ subject..." and "noun phrase + predicate," *la-* is found in a systematic pattern which

⁴⁵ I.e., "simple" in the sense of consisting solely of a clause [NP + Pred] and thus not preceded by a *mubtada'* (noun phrase serving as preposed topic).

⁴⁶ Compare XVI: 124 (cited above), the *la-* of which, due to its sentential *xabar*, has not been displaced from the second position of the sentence, despite the considerable length of the *xabar*: *wa-'inna rabbaka la-yahkumu baynahum yawma l-qiyāmati fīmā kānū fihi yaxtalifūna* 'and 'inna your Lord *la-*judges between them on the Day of the Resurrection concerning that on which they used to disagree.'

suggests that its distribution was originally governed by the presence or absence of a consonant as the final segment in the first word of the clause. In more complex sentential types, *la-* is found prefixed to the last major syntactic constituent (whether that constituent is a phrase or a clause); since most such structures are bipartite, the *la-* is thus, in the majority of cases, found between the first and second constituents, but when a third constituent is found (as in the case of displacement for the purpose of focus) the *la-* will be located between the second and third constituents. We shall return in Chapter Four below to the details of the significance of this distribution for the history of the development of *la-*.

Since the location of *la-* is essentially determined automatically from the structure of the sentence in which it occurs, we cannot regard its emphasizing force as directly concentrating upon any particular element in the sentence—despite the fact that, since Arabic syntax itself is determined to an important degree by questions of the discourse function of the constituent elements, we find a measure of apparent agreement between *la-* and the notion of “comment” such as has been described by Kinberg (1985). Rather, it has been suggested above that the best characterization available for the role of this particle is as a marker of what has been called “status,” an overt indication of the commitment of the speaker to the veracity of his utterance.

PART II

COMPARISON AND RECONSTRUCTION

CHAPTER THREE

ASSEVERATIVE AND PRECATIVE PARTICLES IN THE SEMITIC LANGUAGES

3.1.1 Introduction: One *l*-particle or two?

The historical dimension of the issue of the asseverative *la-* of Arabic cannot be separated from the problem of another *l*-particle of Semitic, the Arabic manifestation of which is known as *lām al-'amr*, the “*l* of the command”—e.g., *li-yaf'al* ‘may he do.’ The similarity which Arabic shows between the asseverative *la-* and this “precative” *li-*, by which wishes and commands are marked, is reflected (in one manner or another) in a number of Semitic languages, leading many researchers to conclude that both of these constructions—the asseverative and the precative—are to be reconstructed for the earliest stage of Semitic.

The question arises, however, of whether we are in the presence of two distinct proto-particles or of a single particle which served two functions. In general, investigators have chosen to reconstruct only one early Semitic **IV*-entity, despite the fact that, as we shall see, it has proved difficult to determine what the precise form of this original entity would have been.

Un premier problème est celui des rapports entre le *lamed* précatif s'alliant à un verbe pour en souligner la portée volitive, et le *lamed* asséveratif qui s'allie la préférence au prédicat mais qui peut se placer à peu près n'importe où dans le discours. Il n'est aucune langue sémitique à notre connaissance, où l'addition du *lamed* à un *yqtl* soit indispensable pour donner à ce dernier une force volitive; il semble assez naturel de tout ramener à un *lamed* originellement indifférencié, possédant simplement une valeur renforçissante, qu'on pouvait appliquer soit à l'affirmation indicative, soit à l'expression du vouloir. Cela rendrait également compte de la valeur précative que le *lamed* peut avoir en plusieurs langues même lorsqu'il s'ajoute à d'autres formes qu'à celles de *yqtl*.

Aussi la plupart des grammairiens admettent-ils plus ou moins explicitement l'indifférenciation originelle des deux *lamed*, quitte à décrire les particularités qui sont venues avec le temps à les opposer dans certaines langues... [Dion 1974: 168]

Huehnergard (1983) reaches the same conclusion, observing that, since we have reason to believe that the jussive verbal form itself (i.e., the reflex of **yip'al-Ø*, without the *l*-particle) could serve to mark wishes or commands in the ancestral language, the proposed *l*-particle reflected in *li-yaf'al* and its counterparts elsewhere in Semitic cannot have been a crucial element in the

original construction. The *l-* must therefore have served the role of an optional emphasizer in this construction, and thus played essentially the same role as that ascribed to the asseverative particles.

... If the particle was optional, then... it must have served simply to add emphasis to the injunction. It therefore had the same function before *yaqtul* that *la-* had elsewhere in the language.

We are left, then, with the following set of circumstances in Arabic: there are two forms which originally had identical meaning (viz. asseverative), and which occurred in complementary distribution. We may therefore conclude that *la-* and *li-* are simply allomorphs of a single particle. [Huehnergard 1983: 580]

We perceive an added dimension to the relationship between the asseverative and the precative *l*-particles if, following the discussion in Chapter Two, we interpret Arabic *la-* as a status marker. The primary role of *la-* in the Qur'ān appears to be the marking of the speaker's commitment to, and involvement in, the veracity of his utterance. In the modal realm of the wish or the command, the involvement of the speaker—in the form of his or her overtly expressed desire that the proposition expressed in the utterance take place—likewise lies at the core of the construction, in that the speaker's attitude toward the proposition in question is underscored. In a certain sense, the wish/command differs from other expressions of modality in that it is shifted (in the Jakobsonian sense), and consequently marked for something analogous to the category of "status" as defined by Aronson. From a structural perspective, the relation between the wish/command and the irrealis modality parallels the relation which connects the asseverative and the indicative.¹

| | - Shifted | + Shifted |
|----------|--|---|
| Realis | <i>zaydun kātibun</i> "Zayd is a writer." | <i>'inna zaydan la-kātibun</i> "Zayd is a writer!" |
| Irrealis | <i>'in yakun zaydun kātiban...</i> "If Zayd is a writer..." | <i>li-yakun zaydun kātiban</i> "May Zayd be a writer!" |

Indeed, an interpretation of *li-yakun* 'may he be' as being marked for the modal counterpart to "status" calls to mind promissory energetic formations such as *la-'azīdannakum* 'la-I shall increase you.' In both cases we are

¹ In this respect, the imperative and comparable volitional constructions seem to differ from other manifestations of modality. Aronson (1991: 115-116) challenges Jakobson's characterization of mood in general as a shifting category, but does not mention such "volitional" modal constructions. Perhaps the general term "mood" is too broad and should be refined to distinguish shifting vs. non-shifting manifestations of the category.

concerned with the overtly stated involvement of the speaker, whether as the instigator of the proposition in question or as its agent.²

In one other respect the discussion of *la-* in the last chapter bears upon the issue of the precative *l-*. If we are correct in relating the position of *la-* in simple clauses to the presence of a consonant-final element in clause-initial position, it may well be significant that, like the energetic, the jussive is one of the few areas in the verbal morphology in which the morphology systematically assigns the finite verb a consonant-final shape ('*aktub-Ø*, '*taktub-Ø*, etc.), at least in most forms of the singular. Since the jussive was the verbal formation employed to express wishes, a construction of the type **yakun zaydun kātiban* 'may Zayd be a writer!' would presumably have provided a phonological environment suitable for the application of the *la-*-prefixation rule discussed in Chapter Two (*la-yakun zaydun kātiban*).

[(X¹) (where the word-final segment is consonantal)...]

| | | | | | |
|------|---|--------------------|---------------------|---|-------------------------------|
| *IV- | [| <i>yakun</i> | <i>kātiban</i> |] | 'may he be a writer!' |
| *IV- | [| <i>yakūnann(a)</i> | <i>kātiban</i> |] | 'he will surely be a writer!' |
| *IV- | [| <i>qad</i> | <i>kāna kātiban</i> |] | 'he was surely a writer' |

All such discussion of the functional similarities of *la-* and the *lām al-'amr* notwithstanding, the issue of a possible relationship linking these two particles remains undecided as long as the formal discrepancy of the vowelings is unresolved. Although there is a clear measure of formal comparability uniting the two elements *la-* and *li-*, the complication posed by the contrasting vowels is not to be disregarded. As we shall see, the intransigence of this problem of vowelings becomes all the more formidable once we leave Arabic *la-* and *li-* behind and confront the cognates of these elements in the other Semitic languages.

3.1.2 The counterfactual **law*

Before addressing the comparative Semitic issues surrounding *la-* and *li-*, it is necessary to isolate this set of issues from the problem of the counterfactual **law*.³ In addition to serving as a conditional marker in

² It may be borne in mind that the category of "futurity" is as amenable to an interpretation along modal lines as along temporal ones.

³ Huehnergard (1983) reconstructs the doublet **lū/*law* for this element. Steiner (1987), however, demonstrates that there is no need to reconstruct **lū*, since the development of **aw* > *ū* seems to have occurred regularly after **l* in Hebrew and Aramaic—cf. Hebrew *lā^ah* 'tablet' < **lawh-*, *lūlāb* 'sprout' < **lawlab-*. Contrast the development of the latter with *kōkāb* 'star' < **kawkab-*

Arabic and elsewhere, reflexes of Semitic **law* in several languages have come to serve in certain wish-like exclamations. Compare, from Biblical Hebrew (Waltke and O'Connor 1990: 638, 680),

wəlû hô'álnû wannéšēb bə'ēher hayyarden (Joshua 7: 7) 'And would that we had been content to dwell on the other side of the Jordan!'

lû málnû bə'ereš mišráyim (Numbers 14: 2) 'Would that we had died in the land of Egypt!'

Similar constructions are found elsewhere in Semitic (Huehnergard 1983: 570-572).

| | | |
|----------|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Arabic: | <i>law ta'rifinahā</i> | 'would that you knew her' |
| Jibbali: | <i>bu-lú yakīn 'ásri</i> | 'would that he were my husband' |
| Syriac: | <i>laway den mettāqel rugz(y)</i> | 'would that my anger were weighed' |
| | | (Job 6:1) ⁴ |

The clear counterfactual orientation of such constructions, it may be noted, stands in marked contrast to the potentiality expressed through the precative wish-expressions (cf. Arabic *law ta'rifinahā* 'would that you knew her!' vs. *li-ta'rifihā* 'may you know her!').⁵

Despite the fact that, in certain usages, the reflexes of Semitic **law* impinge upon the constructions involving the **IV*-particle(s) under discussion here, on the whole the functions served by reflexes of the counterfactual **law* remain distinct from those of the **IV*-complex. We shall therefore regard the **law* as an issue separate from those under investigation in the present study. We shall find, however, that the two issues become blurred somewhat in the discussion of the development of the Akkadian precative, in that the Akkadian particle *lu* has been described by Huehnergard (see §3.4.1) as the result of the formal reflex of Semitic **law* assuming the functional role of the asseverative/precative **IV*-.

⁴ "Although *laway* is clearly related in form and meaning to *lū/law* elsewhere in Semitic, the origin of the extension *-(w)ay* is obscure; it is not impossible that the form is the result of the fusing of **lū* and the Aramaic interjection *wāy* 'alas'." (Huehnergard 1983: 572)

⁵ Further developments affecting counterfactual **law* have given rise to its use in concessive clauses (cf. Old Babylonian *kussāšu lu iḫḫasir šēp imērišu lu illapit* 'whether his saddle was broken or whether the leg of his donkey was wounded'—*Bagh. Mitt.* 2 58 iii 14 f.) and as a conjunction 'or' (cf. ('if a woman lives in her father's house') *lu-u mussa bīta ana batte ušēšibši* 'or her husband had her live in a house apart...'). These developments fall outside the purview of the present study.

3.2. The Arabic *lām al-'amr*

The *lām al-'amr* is found prefixed to finite verbs in the jussive (or “apocopated”) form,⁶ thereby producing a set of forms used to express wishes or commands.

Table 16: *Lām al-'amr* in the Arabic precative paradigm

| | | | | |
|-------------------|---------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|---------------------------|
| <i>li-'aktub</i> | may I write | <i>li-naktub</i> | | let us write |
| <i>li-taktub</i> | may you (m. sg.) write | <i>li-taktubā</i> | <i>li-taktubū</i> | may you (m. pl.) write |
| <i>li-taktubī</i> | may you (f. sg.) write | you (du.) write | <i>li-taktubna</i> | may you (f. pl.) write |
| <i>li-yaktub</i> | let him write | <i>li-yaktubā</i> | <i>li-yaktubū</i> | let them (m.) write |
| <i>li-taktub</i> | let her write | (du.) write | <i>li-yaktubna</i> | let them (f.) write |

In older Arabic, however, the bare jussive itself was capable of expressing wishes, as were its counterparts in Biblical Hebrew and Gō'əz (v. infra).⁷

| | |
|--|--------------------------------------|
| <i>muḥammadu tafdi nafsaka kullu nafsin</i> | <i>'iḏā xiṭta min 'amrin tabālā</i> |
| ‘Muḥammad, let every soul ransom | whenever thou fearest from a matter |
| (<i>tafdi</i>) thy soul | of destruction’ |
| <i>fa-l-yawma 'ašrab ḡayra mustahqibin</i> | <i>'iṯman min allāhi walā wāyili</i> |
| ‘wherefore to-day I shall drink (<i>'ašrab</i>), | a charge of sin from God, nor being |
| not incurring | an uninvited guest’ |

It is therefore probable that, at the earliest stage of Semitic, the presence of the *l*-particle was not strictly necessary for the expression of wishes. At the same time, since an *l*-particle of one sort or another is attested throughout Semitic in close association with such expressions, an early **l*-particle in all likelihood figured importantly in early Semitic wish-constructions, even though it may have been optional.

The problem of the Arabic *lām al-'amr* is complicated somewhat by the fact that the vowel following its *l* varies. Although the normative language

⁶ That is, in terms of Arabic morphology, the finite present or “imperfective” stem without the modal endings *-u* (for the first person, the second-person masculine singular, and the third-person singular), *-na* (for the second person feminine singular and the second and third persons of the masculine plural), or *-ni* (for the second and third persons of the dual)—cf. jussive *yaktub* vs. indicative *yaktub-u* ‘he writes,’ jussive *yaktubū* vs. indicative *yaktubū-na* ‘they (m. pl.) write.’ Despite the fact that much of the information about the vowel of the final syllable of the verb has been lost in the other West Semitic languages, the traces which have survived elsewhere in West Semitic allow for the reconstruction of a system comparable to that of Classical Arabic—cf., e.g., Biblical Hebrew *yéḥen* jussive vs. indicative *yibne^h* ‘he builds’ (= Arabic *yabni* (< **yabniy-Ø*) vs. *yabnī* (< **yabniy-u*)).

⁷ The examples, ascribed to ‘Abū Ṭālib and Imru’ al-Qays respectively, are cited by Howell (1880 pt. II: 17-18).

reads this particle as *li-*, it is known that there were dialects of early Arabic for which the *lām al-'amr* had the shape *la-*. Alongside the *li-* of normative Arabic we thus find the ancient grammarians describing the parallel shape *la-* which was said to be present in one or more of the ancient dialects—Ibn Hišām (1964: 245), for example, observed that the vowel *-a-* was characteristic of the tribe of the Banū Sulaym.

Even within the confines of normative Classical Arabic we find an unexpected degree of variability in the shape of this particle. The *lām al-'amr* routinely lost its vowel when it was preceded by the proclitic conjunctions *wa-* 'and' or *fa-* 'and then' (or, less frequently, by *θumma* 'then').

li-yunfiq dū sa'atin min sa'atihi waman qudira 'alayhi rizquhu fa-l-yunfiq mimmā 'ātāhu llāhu (LXV: 7) 'may he who possesses means spend (*li-yunfiq*) of his means; and he whose means are limited, may he spend (*fa-l-yunfiq*) of what God has given him'
ittabi'ū sabīlanā wa-l-naḥmil xaṭāyākum (XXIX: 12) 'follow our course, and we shall bear (*wa-l-naḥmil*) your sins'

By virtue of this alternation of *li-* ~ *l-*, the *lām al-'amr* differs strikingly from the other homophonous particles with the shape *li-*, viz. the preposition meaning 'to, for' and the subordinating conjunction meaning 'so that.' With neither of these do we find the syncope seen with the *lām al-'amr*.

| | | | |
|----------------------|------------------------|---------------------|----------------------------|
| <i>li-yazid</i> | 'may he increase!' | <i>wa-l-yazid</i> | '... and may he increase!' |
| <i>li-yazīda</i> | 'for Yazīd' | <i>wa-li-yazīda</i> | 'and for Yazīd' |
| ... <i>li-yazīda</i> | '... that he increase' | <i>wa-li-yazīda</i> | '... and that he increase' |

3.3.1 *The asseverative and precatve particles: Comparanda*

We thus find that the *lām al-'amr* presents us with a complex picture once we begin to consider the nature of the vowel directly following its *l-*. In principle, we might be able to disregard the fact that there were dialects showing *la-* rather than *li-*, since, given the very limited and spotty information available on the ancient dialects, we cannot rule out the possibility that in some manner (albeit one which is presently unclear) the dialectal *la-* might be systematically related to the Classical *li-*.⁸ In light of the irregular syncope which is seen in Classical *li-*, however, the *li-/la-*

⁸ It would be easier to entertain the possibility that *la-* was the phonologically legitimate dialectal counterpart to Classical *li-* if there were some indication that the homophonous particles (i.e., the preposition and conjunction) also had **la-* as dialectal correspondents. There is no information available suggesting that this was the case, however.

correspondence assumes considerable significance, since it bolsters the prospect that we are obliged to reconstruct something here more complicated than simple **li-*. If we are to follow the majority of researchers in collapsing the ancestor of the precative *lām al-'amr* with the ancestor of the “emphatic” *lām al-ta'kid* (which, as we have seen, systematically takes the form *la-*) into a single proto-particle, the nature of the vowel in question becomes all the more problematical. We find, in fact, that the data which are cognate to the Arabic *la-/li-/l-* complex found elsewhere in Semitic do little to ameliorate the difficulties facing a phonological reconstruction of the particle in question. In assessing the comparative Semitic data, we not only find that disagreement as to the reconstructed vowel splits the various languages from one another, but also (in the case of the Akkadian and Amorite material) we find disagreement within individual language systems.

3.3.2.1 *The Ugaritic asseverative l-*

Aside from Arabic, the Semitic language bearing witness to the most extensive employment of an “emphasizing” *l*-particle is Ugaritic.⁹ Despite the fact that the Ugaritic texts were written in a consonantal alphabetic system which renders the data largely obscure, it is generally acknowledged that a particle closely paralleling Arabic *la-* seems to have existed in Ugaritic.

Aartun’s study of the particles of Ugaritic concludes that a Ugaritic particle spelled *l-* (glossed by him as “fürwahr”) could be used for the “Bekräftigung” either of a single word or of an entire sentence. He breaks down his examples into the following categories (Aartun 1974: 33-35):

I. “Wortbekräftigung”—The rather infrequent examples of this type typically feature a *l-* prefixed to a noun.¹⁰

lb'l npl larš (67:VI:8-9) ‘*l*-Ba‘1 fell to the earth’

yblnn ḡrm mid ksp gb'm lhmd hrš (51:V:100-101) ‘the mountains bring him much silver, the hills *l*-the most beautiful of gold’

wl 'šm tspr (1010:17-18) ‘and-*l* the tree trunks shall you count’

⁹ Following Aartun, the Ugaritic passages are cited here according to the numbering of the corpus given in Gordon (1965). A discussion of Ugaritic *l-* may also be found in Sivan (1997: 191-192).

¹⁰ One of Aartun’s passages (1029:15-16) contains an instance of *l* preceding a relative pronoun—*l d yškb l b bt mlk* ‘...*l* those who live not in the house of the king’

II. “Satzbegründung”—“Bei der sehr beliebten Anwendung als Satzbegründung dient das *l* lediglich der positiven Unterstreichung von Aussagesätze...” (Aartun 1974: 33).

1. In verbal sentences:

- a. With the suffixed-tense “perfective” verb (*qtl*) as predicate:¹¹

lrgmt lk lālyñ b'l (51:VII:23-24) ‘*l*-I have said to you, O Aliyn Ba’l’

wl'rb bphm 'šr šmm wdg bym (52:62-63) ‘and-*l* there entered into his mouth the birds of the heavens and the fish in the sea’

lmḥšt mdd il ym lklt nhr il rbm ‘*l*-I have struck the beloved of Il, Ym, *l*-I have put an end to the great river-god’ (‘nt III:35-6)

- b. With the apocopated preterite as predicate:¹²

wl ytk dm[h] km rb't tqlm (1Aqht:82-83) ‘and-*l* flowed his tears like quarter-shekel pieces’

širh ltkl 'šrm mth lkly npr (49:II:37) ‘his flesh *l*-ate the birds, his parts *l*-destroyed the feathered ones’

ātṭ šdqh lypq (Krt:12) ‘his lawful wife *l*-he received’

lp'n il [l]tpl lštḥwy (137:30-31) ‘at the feet of Il [*l*]-they fell, *l*-they prostrated themselves’

- c. With the non-past verb as predicate.¹³

āny lyšh tr il ābh (51:IV:47) ‘mightily *l*-cries the steer-god, his father’

lymrū ilm wnšm (51:VII:50-51) ‘*l*-he rules over gods and men’

lāqryk bntb pš (2Aqht:VI:43) ‘*l*-I shall meet you on the path of sin’

- d. With the energetic verb (*yqtl-n*) as predicate (“vereinzelt”).

ltbrknn ltr il āby (2Aqht:I:24) ‘*l*-you will bless him, O steer-god, my father’

2. Nominal sentences

- a. Sentences with a non-verbal predicate.

hlh lšpl (52:32) ‘behold, she *l*-(is) below’

ūgr lrḥq ilm inbb lrḥq ilnym (‘nt:IV:78-79) ‘Ugr *l*-(is) far, O gods; Inbb *l*-(is) far, O divine ones’

ym lmt (68:32) ‘Ym *l*-(is) dead’

¹¹ In addition to the passages here Aartun also cites 51:V:65, 1021:1-3, 117:16-17, 2114:8-9, and 68:7-8.

¹² Due to the writing system, whether or not the verb is in the apocopated (jussive) form is generally a matter of speculation, based upon the fact that the verb in question shows both a subject-prefix and an apparent preterite reference. Aartun also cites 128:V:18-19 and ‘nt: III:37. Particularly well documented is the formula *idk l-ytn (l-ttn) pnm* ‘*m*... ‘then he (she) proceeded to...’ (lit. ‘behold, he (she) *l*-gave the face to...’)—cf., e.g., *idk ltn pnm* ‘*m nrt ilm špš* (49 IV: 31-32) ‘then she proceeded to the light of the gods, Špš.’

¹³ Aartun also cites 6:31 (*lyd' hrh* ‘*l*-he recognizes her pregnancy’).

b. Sentences with a finite verbal predicate.

[b]ph rgm lyšā (68:6) '[from] his mouth the word *l*-came out'

kbh bṭṭ lbt (51:III:21) 'for therein shame *l*-was seen'

šbt dqnk lsrk (51:V:66) 'the gray of your beard *l*-instructs you'

Since the only situation in which the vowels of Ugaritic were expressed through the writing system was in the environment of an adjacent glottal stop,¹⁴ the character *l* which we find employed to represent the asseverative particle provides no clue as to the quality or quantity of the vowel with which it was associated. It is consequently often very difficult simply to determine whether a given particle spelled as *l* should be considered an instance of the asseverative particle, since the same spelling *l* was also used for the preposition 'to, for' (= Arabic *li*-, Hebrew *lā*-, etc.) and the negative marker (= Arabic *lā*, Hebrew *lo*', etc.). For example, Aartun interprets the first *l* in the following line (51:VII:23-24) as an instance of the emphatic particle.

l rgmt. lk. lāliyn b'l 'I-I have said to you, O Aliyn Ba'l'

However, these same lines have received other readings, in several of which the "emphatic" parsing of the *l* is not in evidence. In the original publication of the text, for example, Virolleaud (1932: 155) read "Pour le message, va vers Aleïn Baal." Alongside other differences in the interpretation, *l-rgmt* by this view represents a prepositional phrase in which the preposition *l*- governs a verbal noun derived from the root √*rgm* 'speak,' rather than a finite verb. Ginsberg's interpretation (1955: 135), in contrast, took the *l*- (read as *lā*) to be the negation-marker, and thus arrived at a third, equally plausible possibility ("Said I not to thee, Puissant Baal...?").

Table 17: Parsings of Ug. 51:VII:23-24

| | <i>l</i> - | <i>rgmt</i> | <i>lk</i> | <i>l</i> - | <i>āliyn b'l</i> |
|------------|--------------|-------------|-----------|-------------|------------------|
| Virolleaud | preposition | 'saying' n. | 'go!' | preposition | theonym |
| Aartun | asseveration | 'said' | 'to | vocative | |
| Ginsberg | negation | 1 sg. | you' | particle | |

In this and other instances it is possible, of course, to present reasons for regarding one reading as more likely than another.¹⁵ The Ugaritic text, however, will seldom allow us to say with any certainty that a given *l*-

¹⁴ In the Ugaritic alphabetic script, the glottal stop was represented by one of three distinct characters, the choice being dependent upon the nature of the neighboring vowel (*a*, *i*, *u*).

¹⁵ Thus, concerning 51:VII:23-24, Aartun rejects the reading of a negative question as "nicht vom Kontext gefordert" (1974: 33 fn. 5).

particle is to be read as an asseverative particle rather than as, e.g., a negative in a rhetorical question. While we thus find a general agreement that Ugaritic had an emphasizer *l-*, we find no clear consensus on a corpus of examples of this particle.

In several respects Ugaritic *l* seems to have behaved similarly to Arabic *la-*. Certain of the syntactic structures characterized by what Aartun considers “Satzbegründung” are not far removed from those of the corresponding Arabic types—cf. the prefixation of *l-* to clause-initial verbs (e.g., *lāqryk bntb pš* (2Aqht:VI:43) ‘I-I shall meet you on the path of sin’¹⁶) and the appearance of *l-* before the “comment/*xabar*”-component of nominal clauses (e.g., *ym lmt* (68:32) ‘Ym *l*-(is) dead’), which calls to mind the structure of Arabic sentences containing the *lām al-muzaḥliqa* (cf. ‘inna *zaydan la-karīmun*), assuming that our speculations concerning the original extraclausality of Arabic ‘inna in this construction are justified.

An important difference between Arabic and Ugaritic, as Aartun describes the latter, lies in the placement of *l* in the environment of constituents which have been moved for discourse reasons. As a generalization, we may say that Ugaritic seems to prefer a clause-initial location for *l* in verb-initial clauses.

lrgmt lk lālīyn b’l (51:VII:23-24) ‘I-I have said to you, O Aliyn Ba’l’

lymrū ilm wnšm (51:VII:50-51) ‘I-he rules over gods and men’

This is essentially the same structure as that seen in Arabic, leaving aside the issue of the restrictions which, we have seen, Arabic places upon the verb-forms permitted after *la-* (*la-yaf’alanna...*, *la-qad fa’ala...*). However, Ugaritic also allows *l* to appear after material which has been fronted for reasons of focus.

āny lyšh tr il ābh (51:IV:47) ‘mightily *l*-cries the steer-god, his father’

āp kspbm lyblt (1021:1-3) ‘... moreover their money *l*-I have brought’

w rgmy lhlqt (117:16-17) ‘and my words *l*-I have smoothed’

Although Arabic is familiar with the fronting of material under focus (*al-taqdīm*), the *la-* does not appear to have been permitted in this situation

¹⁶ An example such as *lāqryk* underscores the problems inherent in interpreting the consonantal script of Ugaritic. Should *lāqryk* be read as a counterpart to an Arabic indicative—i.e., as **IV-’aqriyu-ka*, comparable to a hypothetical Arabic **la-’aqri-ka*—or to an Arabic energetic—**IV-’aqriyak-ka* < **-’aqriyan-ka* = Arabic *’aqriyan(na)-ka*? Ugaritic appears to differ from Arabic in that it seems to show no particular reluctance to prepose the emphatic *l-* to indicative as well as to energetic verbs. Cf. the clearly energetic verb in 2Aqht:I:24, *ltbrknn*.

(**zaydan la-ḍarabtu* ‘*Zayd (acc.) I struck’).¹⁷ What we typically find instead of such constructions is a complex structure composed of *’inna* and its *ism*, followed by a complete clause containing a resumptive pronoun (*’inna zaydan la-ḍarabtu-hu* ‘*’inna* Zayd: *la*-I struck him’).

If such structures had existed in pre-Arabic, however, it may be conjectured that they fell victim to the widespread elimination, hypothesized above in Chapter Two, of medial *la*- outside of the *’inna... la...* construction. A pre-Arabic construction such as **zaydan la-ḍarabtu* might thus have been transformed into **’in [zaydan la-ḍarabtu]* and ultimately, in light of the increasingly marginalized status of lightened *’in*, have given way to the more familiar constructions such as *’inna zaydan la-ḍarabtu-hu*, *la-qad ḍarabtu zaydan*, etc.

If Aartun’s account of the Ugaritic particle is correct, perhaps the most curious discrepancy between Ugaritic *l* and Arabic *la*- lies in the fact that the former is said to serve to emphasize not only the clause as a whole but—“in den allerding’s bis jetzt nicht allzu häufigen Belegen dieser Art” (Aartun 1974: 33)—it may emphasize a specific element within the clause. It is presumably significant that in passages such as *lb’l npl larš* (67:VI:8-9) ‘*l*-Ba’l fell to the earth’ and *wl ‘šm tspr* (1010:17-18) ‘and-*l* the tree trunks shall you count’ the *l*- is prefixed to the clause-initial noun phrase, while in the type of *šbt dqnk ltsrk* (51:V:66) ‘the gray of your beard *l*-instructs you’ the *l*- precedes the “*xabar*” of its clause.

3.3.2.2 The Ugaritic precative *l*-

Ugaritic also shows evidence of a counterpart to the Arabic *lām al-’amr*. Although the writing system renders it difficult to say with certainty, it appears that the verb to which *l* is added to produce wish-forms agrees with Arabic in having the Ø-ending (“apocopated”) shape.

šph lṭpn lyh (125:23) ‘may the scions of the friendly one live’
lāšši hm (68:2) ‘I shall bring them forth’

In addition, and in contrast to Arabic, Ugaritic displays wish-forms composed of an *l*-particle prefixed to the suffixed-stem verb (= the Arabic past).

l-mlkt (129:22) ‘may you be(come) king!’
l-šlmt (100:3) ‘may you be at peace!’

¹⁷ As we have seen, however, the Bašran grammarians did claim that such constructions were permissible.

l-yrt npš bn ilm mt (67:I:6-7) ‘may you descend into the throat of the son of Il, Mt’

Aartun (1974: 75) compares the latter construction to Arabic syntagms in which the *irrealis* marker *law* is employed to reflect wishes predicated upon regret for a counterfactual proposition. Huehnergard (1983: 584), however, observes that the Ugaritic examples differ from their putative Arabic and Hebrew counterparts in that they lack the crucial notion of counterfactuality. He recommends interpreting Aartun’s *l-ql* examples as instances of an ancillary volitional value for the suffixed-stem verb, to be compared to Arabic formations such as *la’ana-ka llāhu* ‘God curse you!’

The Ugaritic wish-expression, whether it is composed of a jussive verb or of a suffixed-stem verb, may also be produced without the *l*-particle.

tši km rh npšh (3Aqht obv:24) ‘may his soul go out like wind’

In light of the optionality of the *l*-, Huehnergard sees the heart of the wish-construction in the verb itself (whether jussive or suffixed-stem), the particle *l*- serving merely as a general emphasizer playing no specific role in the modality of the construction. He is therefore able to collapse the two functions of *l*- (emphasizer vs. wish-marker) into a single asseverative one which is comparable to the Arabic *lām al-ta’kīd*.

3.3.3 Aramaic *l*-particles

There is no clear attestation of an *l*-particle used with asseverative force among the Aramaic languages,¹⁸ and among the documents from the earliest period of Aramaic the precative *l*-particle is restricted to the inscriptions of Zincirli and Tell Fekherye.¹⁹ In the Hadad inscription from Zincirli we find the following occurrences of *l*-precatives, which are given here following Tropper’s reading of the text (Tropper 1993: 82-84, 94-95).

| | |
|-------------------------|---|
| <i>w*hdd. hr’.</i> | ‘Und was Hadad betrifft—Zornesglut soll er fürwahr |
| <i>ly*t*k*h*[.]</i> | über(?) ihn(?) ausgießen (read <i>*lVyattik-</i>)’ |
| (H:23) | |
| <i>wšnh. lmn’. mnh.</i> | ‘Und den Schlaf soll er nachts von ihm fernhalten |
| <i>bly*l’</i> (H:24) | (read <i>*lVmna’</i>)’ |

¹⁸ The apparent concessive particle *lw* of Zincirli—cf. *lw b’l ksp h’ wlv b’l zhb* (KAI 215: 10-11) ‘though he were a possessor of silver or a possessor of gold’—has presumably developed from the counterfactual **law* rather than from the asseverative **lV*-particle (Huehnergard 1983: 571).

¹⁹ The form *lḥnw* of the Aramaic ostrakon of Aššur, at times considered a precative (Kaufman 1974: 124-126), is probably to be read as a negative perfective (Dupont-Sommer 1944-45: 39).

- lt*gm*rw*. 'yhh[.] '(so) sollen sich fürwahr seine männlichen
zkr*w plktšh. Verwandten versammeln (read *litgammVrū) and
b'bny (H:30-31) ihn daraufhin mit Steinen erschlagen (read *pa-
IVktušū-hV)'
- [ltg]m*rn. 'yhh. '[(so) sollen sich [fürwahr] ihre Schwestern
plk*t*šnh*. versammeln (read *litgammVrn(a)) und sie
b'*bny (H:31) daraufhin fürwahr mit Steinen erschlagen (read
*IVktušna-hā)'

The bilingual Tell Fekherye inscription likewise employs several *l*-precatives in its Aramaic text. These are given below according to Abou-Assaf's reading (1981: 13-14). The precative value of these forms is clear both from the context and from the use of the precative form for the counterparts to these forms in the Akkadian text of the inscription.²⁰

- wmn : 'hr : kn / ybl : 'Und wer also später bringt zu seiner Gründung Neues,
lknnh : hds : dann soll er eben meinen Namen darauf setzen (*lšm*
wšmyrn : lšm : bh : = Akkadian *liš-kun* 'let him place'). Und der, wer
wzy : yld : šmy : meinen Namen davon tilgt und seinen Namen darauf
mnh / wyšym : šmh setzt, der mächtige Hadad soll sein Gegner sein (*gbr*
bh : hdd : gbr : *lhwy* = Akkadian *lu-ú EN di-ni-šú* 'let (the god) be
lhwy qblh ... (ll. 10- his opponent').
12)
- wl / zr' : w'l : yḥsd : 'Und er soll säen (*lZR'* = Akkadian *li-riš* 'let him sow'),
w'lp : š'ryn lZR' aber er wird nicht ernten. Und er soll tausendfach
wprys : l'hz : mnh / Gerste säen (*lZR'* = *li-riš*), aber er soll nur ein
wm'h : s'wn : Halbscheffel davon in Empfang nehmen (*l'hz* =
lhynqn : 'mr : w'l : Akkadian *li-iš-bat* 'let him grasp')... Und hundert
yrwy : wm'h : swr : Schafe soll ein Lamm säugen (*lhynqn*),²¹ aber es
lhynqn / 'gl : w'l : wird nicht satt werden. Und hundert Kühe soll ein
yrwy : wm'h : nšwn Kalb säugen (*lhynqn*), aber es wird nicht satt
: lhynqn : 'lym : w'l werden. Und hundert Frauen sollen einen Säugling
yrwy / wm'h : nšwn säugen (*lhynqn*), aber es wird nicht satt werden.
: l'pn : btnwr : w'l : Und hundert Frauen sollen in einem Ofen Brot
ym'l'nh : wmn : backen (*l'pn*), aber sie werden ihn nicht füllen. Und
qlqlt' llqtw : 'nšwh vom Misthaufen sollen seine Männer Gerste
š'ryn : l'klw... (ll. sammeln (*llqtw* = Akkadian *lil-qu-te* 'let them
19-22) pick'), um (sie) zu essen...

²⁰ For a discussion of the precative in the Tell Fekherye inscription see Muraoka 1983-84: 95-98. The morphology of the precative of Akkadian will be discussed below.

²¹ In each of the three "suckling" passages, as well as in the "baking" passage, the Akkadian construction differs from the Aramaic: 1 ME Ug *la ú-šá-ba-a* UDU.NIM!... 1 ME *a-pi-a-te la-a-šam-la-a* NININDU (ll. 32-36) 'may a hundred ewes not satisfy the lamb... may a hundred baking-women not fill the oven.'

In both of these inscriptions, the forms in question stand in the third person. Although the subject-prefix of these verbs ought to have originally contained *y-, what we find in all but one of these forms is an apparent coalescence of the *l*-particle with the verb's initial syllable, and in conjunction with this a complete disappearance of the consonant *y from the graphic shape of the word (*ltgmrw* = **litgammVrū* rather than **IV-yitgammVrū*). The sole exception to this pattern is *lytk-* (Hadad line 23), in which the *y appears to have escaped the contraction. This verb *lytk-* has been interpreted as a causative-stem form, and Dion (1974: 123-124) ascribes the survival of its -y- to the quality of the vowel following it: in contrast to the remaining precative forms of the Hadad text (*lmn'*, *ltgmrw*, *ltgmrn*, -*lktš-*, -*lktšn-*)—the verbs of which would have had an -i- as the preradical vowel, if we may judge by the corresponding forms in later Aramaic (cf. Biblical Aramaic *yip'al-*, *yitpa'al-*)—the causative form would have contained a preradical -a- (cf. Biblical Aramaic *yap'el*). Dion concludes that, if one hypothesizes that the language of the Hadad inscription resembled later Aramaic in that it already employed a distinction between y-a- (in the causative-verb stem) and y-i- (in the remaining stems), and if one further assumes that the original shape of the precative particle itself was *li- (as it is in Literary Arabic), it is possible to account for the shape of the precative of the early Aramaic inscriptions by positing that a contraction took place in the environment of like vowels (*lmn'* < **li-(y)imna'*), while the differing vowels of the particle and the verbal subject-prefix led to the blocking of the contraction in the case of the causative (*lytkh* < **li-yattik-*).²²

The contraction in the precative, it should be noted, seems to be very old indeed. Cuneiform renderings of precatives embedded in Aramaic names dating from the beginning of the first millennium (Zadock 1977: 383, 397) show that the *y was already gone by that time, despite the fact that the preradical vocalization of these forms still followed the archaic pattern known as “Barth’s law,” regarded as the vocalization pattern of the earliest reconstructable stage of the Semitic verb (Barth 1894). The contraction, if such it is, thus seems to have taken place well before the development of the preradical opposition -i-/a- of later Aramaic.

²² The form *lhynqn* (3 x) (√*ynq*) of Tell Fekherye, if it has been interpreted correctly as a precative formed from a causative stem (‘may they (f.pl.) suckle’), apparently retains the causative-stem marker *h* while losing the person-marker *y—*lhynqn* = *IVhayniq-* < **IV-yVhayniq-*).

| | | |
|---------------------------------------|------------------------|--|
| ŠEŠ- <i>la-ku-nu</i> | < ? *IV- <i>yakūn</i> | 'may the (divine) brother be firm (?)' |
| ^d <i>tam-meš-la-di-in</i> | < ? *IV- <i>yaḏīn</i> | 'may the Sun-god judge' |
| <i>mil-ki-la-rim</i> | < ? *IV- <i>yarīm</i> | 'may *Milkī be exalted' |
| ^d <i>tam-meš-li-in-ṭar</i> | < ? *IV- <i>yinṭar</i> | 'may the Sun-god guard, watch' |

In these names, the nature of the vowel between the *l* and the stem of the precativ agrees with Barth's law in that we find the preradical vowel *a* when the verb-stem contains a high vowel (*i* or *u*) and the preradical vowel *i* when the stem contains *a*—i.e., *-lakūn*, *-larīm* vs. *-linṭar* (Zadock 1977: 94-95).²³ The loss of the person-marker **y-* in the early Aramaic precativ thus cannot easily be interpreted as having been dependent upon the verb having the preradical-vowel pattern characteristic of the later stages of Aramaic, as Dion wishes to do (Huehnergard 1983: 590), and it becomes difficult to adduce the "contraction" as strong evidence that the Old Aramaic particle must have had the vocalism **li-*.

In the later Aramaic languages we find that in general the distinction between the precativ **lip'al* and the indicative **yip'al* has been abandoned. Generally speaking, the western Aramaic languages have lost the **lip'al*-form,²⁴ while in the eastern languages the **yip'al*-form has been reduced or eliminated.

Western Aramaic: In Biblical Aramaic and the Aramaic of Qumran we find that the *l*-prefixed form *lēhēwe'* has replaced the **y*-prefixed form **yeḥēwe'* as the non-past/modal form of *hāwā* 'be,' while the corresponding forms of verbs other than *hāwā* have retained the *y-* (e.g., Biblical Aramaic *yiqre'* 'he calls'). While it may well be the case that this substitution was motivated by a desire to avoid writing a form which would have been unacceptably similar to the theonym *YHWH* (Bauer and Leander 1927: 152),²⁵ we may at least interpret *lēhēwe'* as

²³ The preradical vowels of prefixed verbs other than the precativ (i.e., without the *l-*) also largely adhere to Barth's pattern—*ia-ad-bu-ru* < **yadbur-*, *id-da-ḥu* < **yidda'-*. Although the pattern is occasionally disrupted, it is not necessary to characterize the role of Barth's law in such names as "ein Durchgangsstadium in historischer Zeit" (Beyer 1984: 109).

²⁴ "In Sätzen verschiedener Art findet sich im pal. Talmud und Midrasch einige Mal Voransetzung der Partikel [*l*]. Onkelos und Prophetentargum... wenden die Form nie an, doch finden sich Beispiele in Est II und in den jer. Targg. zum Pent., hier indes nur bei [*hwh*] wie im bibl. Aram..." (Dalman 1960: 264). Kaufman, however, regards such forms as "certainly corruptions from B[abylonian] T[almudic]" (1974: 125 n. 46).

²⁵ In addition to the taboo-explanation for Biblical Aramaic *lēhēwe'* it may be noted that the syntax of the Aramaic verb 'be' differs from that of other verbs in that (as in the case of Arabic *kāna*) its present indicative, in its most basic function as copula, takes the form Ø rather than appearing as an overt verb (i.e., "he (is) good"). A form **yeḥēwe'*, unlike most verbs, would thus have been limited to the non-modal future (as well as to the existential

evidence that the dialect which gave rise to Biblical Aramaic was familiar with the *l*-prefixed verbal formation.

Eastern Aramaic: The *l*-forms are to be found in Hatran, as well as in Babylonian Talmudic and early Mandaic, and it is widely assumed that the *n*-forms of classical Syriac and Mandaic (cf., e.g., Syriac *nektôb* 'he will write') represent a further development of the earlier **lip'al*-structure, despite the fact that the details of the history remain problematical.²⁶

The Aramaic corpus provides us with evidence supporting the existence of an **l*-particle used in early early precative constructions, but the evidence is strangely one-dimensional in that the *l*-particle appears to have been restricted to those verbal forms which would otherwise show the subject-prefix **y-* (i.e., the masculine third-person singular and the third-person plural). We see no sign whatsoever of an *l*-particle prefixed to, e.g., a *t*-prefixed form (**IV-tip'al* 'may she do!'), despite the fact that there appears to be no intrinsic reason that such a form should not have existed originally. At the same time, we note that the precative forms which are attested in Aramaic (aside from the causative *lytk* of Zincirli) agree in having eliminated the subject-marker **y-* (**lip'al* rather than **IV-yip'al*), despite the fact that it is not at all clear that this apparent contraction would have constituted a regular phonological development.

3.3.4 Amorite *l*-particles

The **lip'al*-formation which appears to underlie the Aramaic precative finds an apparent match in an analogous formation attested for Amorite.²⁷ Since the language of the Amorites is attested only through personal names, any conclusions about its grammar which may be extrapolated from the onomastic corpus must remain speculative. Nonetheless, we find evidence pointing to the existence of finite verbs appearing both with the subject-prefix *y-* and with a prefix *l-*.²⁸

functions of 'be'). This suggests that the precative *lehêwe'* would have held a more prominent position among the finite forms of 'be' than the precative would have occupied among the forms of other verbs, rendering its generalization as the sole non-past form of 'be' more easily comprehensible.

²⁶ "Als Praefix der 3. P. s. m. erscheint in einer altsyr. Inschrift noch [y]. Es ist durch die Form mit der Prekativpartikel *liyi* > *li* verdrängt. Da grade eine Reihe der gebräuchlichsten syr. Verba *l* im Stamme aufweisen, ist *l* vor diesem zu *n* dissimiliert und dann verallgemeinert" (Brockelmann 1981: 84 Anm. 1).

²⁷ Amorite names are cited by the number assigned by Gelb (1980).

²⁸ I follow Huehnergard in taking the *l*-prefixed forms to be third-person forms rather than first-person forms (< **la-'a-*), as Gelb does. See Huehnergard (1983: 581-582 fn. 106).

| | | |
|---|--|-------------------------------------|
| <i>ia-am-li-ik</i> -DINGIR (2938) ‘‘Il-rules’’ | <i>la-am-li-ik</i> -DINGIR (4228) ‘May-’Il-rule!’ | * <i>yamlik</i> -/* <i>lamlik</i> - |
| <i>ia-aḥ-wi</i> -DINGIR (2871) ‘‘Il-lives’’ | <i>la-aḥ-wi-ma-lik</i> (4225) ‘May-the-king-live!’ | * <i>yaḥwiy</i> -/* <i>laḥwiy</i> - |
| <i>ia-ri-im</i> -IM (3439) ‘Hadd-exalts’ | <i>la-ri-im-ba-aḥ-li</i> (4318) ‘May-my-lord-exalt!’ | * <i>yarīm</i> -/* <i>larīm</i> - |

Goetze (1958: 32) has remarked, ‘‘One can hardly err in assuming that in the left column we deal with *yaf’al* forms and that in the right column a prefix *la-* has been added to these forms, *la-ya-* yielding *la-* (probably with a long *a*).’’ The contraction seems to have taken place here, as it has in the Aramaic forms cited above.

In addition to *la-*, we also find a few names containing verbal forms beginning with *li-*, viz. *liši* and *litur*.

| | |
|--|----------------|
| <i>li-šī-aš-du-um</i> | (4375) |
| <i>su-mu-li-šī</i> , <i>su-um-li-šī-im</i> | (5648), (5750) |
| <i>li-tu-ur-a-li</i> | (4373) |
| <i>li-tu-ur-aš-du-um</i> | (4373a) |

Since the *l*-less counterparts to these particular verbs show the subject-prefix *i-* rather than *ya-* (*i-šī*, *i-tūr*), it is likely that the distinction between *li-* and *la-* is to be ascribed to the nature of the individual verb, rather than to the particle.

... [The forms *i-šī* and *i-tūr*] suggest that, at least in some dialects of Amorite, initial *ya-* became *yā-* or *i* in an open syllable. The forms with *li-*, therefore, do not necessarily represent a particle **li-*; they may also reflect a contraction of *ay* (or *ai*): **la-yaši*’ > **la-y(ə)ši*’ > *liši*’; **la-yatūr* > **la-y(ə)tūr* > *lītūr*. Accordingly, we would maintain that the form *li-* in Amorite is merely a phonologically conditioned allomorph of *la-*. [Huehnergard 1983: 582]²⁹

The shape *li-* is also attested before the theonym *il* (*mi-il-ki-li-el* (4688) ‘my-counsel-is-’Il,’ *su-mu-li-el* (5681) ‘the-(divine) Name-is-’Il’), where it evidently represents a variant of *la-* conditioned by the initial **i-* of the

²⁹ While Huehnergard is doubtless correct in maintaining that we should be reluctant to assume a distinction between Amorite *la-* and *li-*, the contraction analysis which he presents here is not without difficulties. It is not clear, for example, why the shift of **la-ya-* > *li-* should be as infrequent as it is, so that we do not find, e.g., **lirīm* rather than *larīm* (< **la-yarīm*). The data as they stand point more directly to the vowel of *li-* being due, not to any contraction of **a-ya-*, but to the presence of the *i-* in the *l*-less forms of these verbs (*i-šī*, *i-tūr*)—whatever the explanation of that *i-* may be. As in the case of the Aramaic cuneiform names, I suspect that the vowel of the first syllable of the *l*-prefixed forms (e.g., *la-ḥu-un*, *i-tūr*) has been recast on the model of their *l*-less counterparts (cf. *ia-ḥu-un*, *i-tūr*).

name—compare *mi-il-ki-la-el* (4686), *su-mu-la-el* (5676) (Huehnergard 1983: 582)—unless these names contain the prepositional *l-*.

The spelling *lu* in *mi-il-ki-lu-i-la* (4691) (which is evidently a form of the same name as *mi-il-ki-li-el* and *mi-il-ki-la-el*) remains difficult to interpret, leading Huehnergard to suggest hesitantly “Akkadian influence.” The name *lu-ḥa-a-a-sa-mu-um* (4377)/*lu-ḥa-a-a-sa-mi-um* (4378) remains obscure.³⁰

3.3.5.1 Southwest Semitic *l*-particles: *Gəʿəz* and the modern Ethiopic languages

While the bare subjunctive verb-form of Ethiopic (corresponding to the Arabic jussive) could serve for the expression of wishes in *Gəʿəz* (*nəndəq hagara* ‘aedificemus urbem!’), a prefixed *la-* was not infrequently prefixed to the verb (*layəkun bərhān* ‘let there be light!’ *latəddamsas yəʿati nafs* ‘may that person be cut off’) (Praetorius 1886: 51; Huehnergard 1983: 579). In addition, *Gəʿəz* *la-* is found prefixed to the conditional marker *ʾamma*, yielding a structure strongly reminiscent of the Classical Arabic *al-lām al-muwaffiʾa* of *la-ʾin*.

Among the modern Ethiopic languages, a prefixed *l-* has come to mark the first-person singular of the subjunctive in several languages of the southern branch—Amharic, for example, contrasts a first-person singular prefix *lə-* in the subjunctive (e.g., *lə-sbär* ‘let me break’; cf. Arabic *li-ʾaṯbir* ‘let me break’) to an *ə-* in the present (*ə-säbr-allähu*) (Leslau 1968: 107, 249-250); cf. likewise Gafat *mozbabī ləndäl əbli laḡäšan laṣəbṭi* ‘I said: “Let me go up (*ləndäl*) a palm tree and seize (*laṣəbṭi*) its top...”’ (Leslau 1945: 133).³¹ In the northern Ethiopic language Tigre, in contrast, it is the third person of the subjunctive rather than the first person that *l-* serves to mark (Leslau 1945a: 8)—e.g., masc. sing. *ləfgär*, masc. plural *ləfgäro*, and fem. plural *ləfgära*—*ləṣna* ‘may it be strong,’ *ʾəḡəl ləqtäl mäša* ‘he came in order to kill.’ This formation calls to mind the precative **lipʾal-* which underlies the Aramaic and Amorite forms discussed above.³²

³⁰ “... In a few instances... it is tempting to suggest that *-lu-ú* reflects asseverative *la-* (also becoming *lu-* with vowel harmony) with an independent pronoun: e.g., *zi-im-ri-lu-ú /dimrī-lu-hū/* ‘my protection is he (the god) indeed’ (6515; fem. name)...” (Huehnergard 1983: 582-583).

³¹ Leslau (1945: 70) mentions that Gafat *lə-* is also used with the third person subjunctive, but this statement evidently stems from a misparsing of the first-person *ləndäl* as ‘in order that he may go up.’

³² Huehnergard hypothesizes a development **la-yəqtal* > **lə-yəqtal* > **liqtal* > *ləqtal* for the Tigre subjunctive. “... This may have occurred first in verbs I-w/y and II-w/y. Cf. the jussive forms *lilad*, from **lə-yəlad* “let him beget” (cf. *Gəʿəz* (*la-*)*yəlad*); *libā* “let him

3.3.5.2 *The Epigraphic South Arabian languages*

Höfner (1943: 76-7) observes that in Epigraphic South Arabian clauses expressing wishes and commands we find an *l*-particle added to prefixed-tense verb forms both with and without the *-n*-endings which correspond to the Arabic energetic conjugation (*nūn al-ta'kīd*). Since the purely consonantal script in which the inscriptions are documented does not allow a clear view of the morphology of these verbs, Höfner follows the model of Literary Arabic in interpreting these constructions.

... Das Nordarab. drückt Wünsche, Befehle usw. durch *li* mit dem Jussiv oder durch *la* mit dem *Energicus* aus. Hier hätten wir also im Nord- und Südarab. ungefähr die gleichen Verhältnisse; d. h., die Imperfeka ohne *n* sind in diesen Fällen Jussivformen, was übrigens fallweise auch aus dem Schriftbild zu erkennen ist, während die *n*-Imperfeka als *Energicus*formen anzusehen sein werden. Daß letztere im Südarab. überwiegen, erklärt sich aus der feierlichen und nachdrücklichen Sprache, wie sie die Inschriften bevorzugen; so stehen z. B. in dem Gesetz Gl 542 ausschliesslich *n*-Imperfeka. [Höfner 1943: 77]

Examples of the constructions in question are *wḏšmwy lyz'* (RES 850₆) 'and may ḌŠMWY go forth' and *ly't 'dy 'twtm* (Gl 1210₁₁) 'may it come to 'TWT',³³ and, with the energetic *n*-suffix, *lymtθlnn bhw* (Sab. Denkm. 21₄) 'sie sollen sich danach richten.' In addition to constructions of these types, Beeston (1984: 15) cites instances in Sabaeen in which we find that the prefix *y-* has not been written after the *l*-particle. Once again, we seem to have here reflexes of the configuration **lip'al-*.

... This could not have been detected from the sg. forms, which might be (and in the past usually have been) interpreted as infinitives; but the authenticity of the phenomenon is guaranteed by pl. forms such as J 720/14 *wbn / ddbyn / lhdrrn* "let the Banu D beware", J 669/14 *lhwfrnn / 'tthmw / wbnhwm / cdy / mhrmn* "their wives and children must make pilgrimage to the temple".

3.3.5.3 *The Modern South Arabian languages*

Among the Modern South Arabian languages, a prefixed *l-* is characteristic of those elements of the subjunctive paradigm which would otherwise have

enter" (Go'az (*la-*)*yābā'*). The resulting vowel *i* (< **ay(a)*) was reduced to *a* in doubly closed syllables of sound verbs (*laqtal*)..." (Huehnergard 1983: 580 fn. 94). It is not clear why **la-yā-* should have become **la-yā-*. Leslau interprets the *i* of *lilād* as representing the influence of the *I-y* verbs (e.g., *libās* (< **l-aybās*), the subjunctive (3. masc. sg.) of *yābsā* 'be dry') (Leslau 1945a: 18).

³³ The spelling *ly't* provides grounds for suspecting that we have here a jussive (= Arabic *li-ya'ti*) rather than an indicative (= Arabic *ya'tī* < **ya'tiyu*).

no consonantal onset. For all of these languages, this includes the first person (singular and dual), the *- of which has been lost (Johnstone 1975: 17, 27).³⁴

| | Mehri | Jibbali (Sheri) | Socotri |
|-------------------|-------------------|-----------------|------------------|
| 1 singular | <i>l-ərke:z</i> | <i>ʿl-ərʃəs</i> | <i>l-ikʿbər</i> |
| 1 dual | <i>l-ərka:zo:</i> | <i>l-ərəʃso</i> | <i>l-əkʿbəro</i> |
| Contrast 1 plural | <i>nərke:z</i> | <i>ʿnərʃəs</i> | <i>nəkʿbər</i> |

In addition, the subjunctive *l*-prefix is employed in Jibbali and Socotri for a class of verbal formations in which the consonantal prefix **t-* has disappeared. Contrast, for example, the subjunctive of the causative-stem paradigm of Jibbali with that of Mehri, in which the original subject-prefix pattern is retained.³⁵

| | Jibbali | Mehri | |
|------------------|----------------|------------------|-------------------------|
| 2 masc. singular | <i>l-əʃəlt</i> | <i>təʿhansəm</i> | [< <i>*tu(ha)CCiC</i>] |
| 3 masc. singular | <i>yəʃəlt</i> | <i>yəʿhansəm</i> | [< <i>*yu(ha)CCiC</i>] |
| 3 fem. singular | <i>l-əʃəlt</i> | <i>təʿhansəm</i> | [< <i>*tu(ha)CCiC</i>] |

In addition, Socotri shows *li-* rather than **y-* as the general prefix for the third person masculine subjunctive—cf. *likʿbər* (sg.), *likʿbəro* (du.), and *likʿbər* (pl.). The presence of *l-* here runs counter to the generalization stated above, in that, since the **y*-prefix has not been lost in Socotri³⁶ and the underlying verbs hence do not begin with a vowel, there would appear to be no reason for the *l-* to have been added. At the same time, however, these forms are distinctly reminiscent of early Aramaic and Amorite **lipʿal-* and Tigre *ləqtāl*. It is thus possible that the Socotri subjunctive forms are a trace of a construction of considerable antiquity.

3.3.6 The Biblical Hebrew emphatic lamed

The Biblical Hebrew corpus contains a number of passages in which a prefixed *lə-* is found, despite a context which does not seem to agree with the canonical functions of the preposition *lə-* ‘to, for.’ Citing the parallels of Arabic *la-* and Akkadian *lu*, Haupt suggested that these were manifestations of a cognate Hebrew *lə*-particle serving to mark emphasis

³⁴ The verbs cited, from Johnstone 1975: 17, are Mehri *rəko:z* ‘to stand upright, stick in the ground,’ Jibbali *rəʃəs* ‘to kick’ and Socotri *kʿəbər* ‘to bury.’ “It can be confirmed that this marker occurs only rarely in H[arsusi]” (Johnstone 1975: 28).

³⁵ The cited verbs are *əflət* ‘escape’ and *hənsə:m* ‘breathe.’ In the passive forms of the basic stem the dropping of the subject-prefixes extends even to **y-* and **n-*. For discussion of the development of these verbs in Jibbali and Socotri see Testen (1992b).

³⁶ Cf. the third-person masc. indicative forms *yəʿkʿəbər* (sing.), *yəʿkʿəbəro* (dual), and *yəʿkʿəbər* (plur.), in which the **y-* has not been lost.

(e.g., Haupt 1905-1906: 201). Since that time, and particularly in the wake of the discovery of the *l-* of Ugaritic, the set of passages held to be amenable to such a reading has been expanded, notably through the efforts of Casanowicz (1896), Eitan (1922), Dahood (1956; 1963: 7-8, 19-20, 22-23, 37, 39, 40-41; 1970: 406-407), Mejía (1963), and Blommerde (1969: 31 *passim*). A frequently cited example of the value of positing the existence of a *lamed emphaticum* is to be seen in Ecclesiastes 9: 4.

kî-ləkēlēb hay hū' tōb min-hā'arye^h hammet 'for *lā*-(a) live dog [he] is better than the dead lion'

Here it is not at all clear how *lā-* could be given its normal reading as a preposition, and even the cautious Nötscher, who discards many of the claims of the proponents of the emphatic *l-*, observes, "Der Dativ ist hier ausgeschlossen und die Erklärung 'was einen lebenden Hund anbelangt' wäre gewunden und geschraubt. Am besten entspricht trotz des folgenden *hū'*: 'Denn gewiss, ein lebender Hund ist besser als ein toter Löwe'..." (Nötscher 1953: 379).

Similarly Psalms 89: 19—considered by Muraoka (1985: 119) to be "the most probable case of Lamed emphaticum"—seems to call for a reading containing the emphasizing *lā-*.

kî laYHWH maginnēnū waliqdōš yiśrā'el malkēnū 'for verily YHWH is our shield and the Holy One of Israel is our king'

Taking the two *lamed*'s to be emphasizing particles rather than prepositions yields an entirely comprehensible interpretation of the passage. That the prepositional reading cannot be excluded, however, is indicated by the fact that it was adopted for the Septuagint (*hoti tou Kuríou hē antilēpsis, kai tou hagíou Israēl basilēōs hēmōn*).

... [The Septuagint, the Vulgate, and the Targum] unanimously ascribe the regular meaning to the Lamed as a preposition, and further, the general context shows that the passage concerned mentioned the King as one through whom God governs and protects Israel rather than God Himself, so that the subjects of the sentence would be 'our shield' or 'our protector' and 'our king.'... [Muraoka 1985: 119-120]

Another case in point is to be found in Proverbs 19: 8.

qone^h-lēb 'oheb napšō šomer tēbūnā limšo'-tōb 'the acquirer of intellect loves his soul, the watcher of wisdom [*limšo'*] good'

In this verse several researchers have suggested that *limšo'* makes little sense as long as it is read as the infinitive 'to find.' In light of the parallel '*oheb*, these interpreters have judged it preferable to take the <*lms'*> of the consonantal text to represent **lā-moše'*, a participial predicate preceded by an emphatic *lā*—"Celui qui acquiert du sens aime son âme, celui qui conserve la prudence trouve certainement le bien" (Eitan 1922: 3), "He who

acquires wisdom is a friend to himself, who fosters understanding indeed finds good fortune” (Dahood 1963: 40; cf. similarly Mejía 1963: 184-185).

In addition to such cases of prefixed *lā-*, Haupt also maintained (Haupt 1907) that certain of the problematical instances of *l'*—instances for which the normal interpretation as the negative particle *lo'* seemed to run counter to the context—were also to be taken as manifestations of an emphatic *l*-element. This interpretation was also ultimately extended to cases in which a *lw* in the consonantal text could not be readily analyzed either as *lô* ‘to him’ or as the counterfactual *lû*.

wə'ānokî lo' 'ēhyē^h kə'ahat šiphote'kâ (Ruth 2: 13) ‘and I <l'> shall be like one of your maidservants’

'im 'attâ lû šamâ'énî nātattî kē'sep haššāde^h qah mimménî (Genesis 23: 13) ‘<lw> hear me, I give the money for the mountain, take it from me’

However, there has been resistance to many of the emphatic readings of the *l*-particles in question. In a number of the passages concerned, the proponents of the *lamed emphaticum* have been obliged to call for extensive emendations of the Masoretic text (cf., e.g., **lā-moše'* for Masoretic *limšo'* above). In few of the passages is an alternative reading (e.g., with a prepositional *lā-*, a rhetorical question, or similar familiar construction) rather than the putative emphasizer absolutely excluded, and, indeed, in certain exceptionally recalcitrant cases the reading of an emphatic particle yields only marginally more comprehensibility than other readings.³⁷ Moreover, the distribution of the apparent cases of emphatic *l*- within the text seems to point more toward its being a later development than an archaic survival.

... It is remarkable that the majority of the examples adduced for the alleged emphatic Lamed are taken from those parts of the Scriptures of relatively late composition, such as Ch[ronicles] and Pr[overbs], while the comparative Semitic evidence can be best interpreted as indicating this use as an ancient feature... [Muraoka 1985: 115]

In short, the ultimate support for the *lamed emphaticum* lies not so much in the biblical text as in the comparative evidence, and it is unlikely that the notion of such an entity would have occurred to Biblical scholars were it not for the existence of Arabic *la-* and Akkadian *lu*. Certainly problematical occurrences of *lamed* are to be found, but it is equally

³⁷ E.g., “... Kropat describes the peculiar use of Lamed in Ch[ronicles] in detail, and it must be admitted that there found examples difficult to explain like 2Ch 5.12 *halwiyyim hamšōrārim lxullām l'āsāf lhēmān*... Certainly ‘emphasis’ is not the right term to describe such a use, and a dry chronological list of personal names would be the last place to call for an emphatic construction...” (Muraoka 1985: 121).

conceivable that, for many of these cases, we are better off assuming that we are in the presence of an unfamiliar function of the wide-ranging preposition *la-* rather than of an unfamiliar separate entity. Many researchers have concluded, however, that we cannot hope to understand all the instances of *la-* without assuming the existence of such an entity, and that, once the assumption of an emphatic *lamed* has been made, there is no reason not to make use of it whenever the opportunity arises.

For our present purposes, we shall remain agnostic on the question of the putative “*lamed* emphaticum” of Hebrew. It will be seen below in Chapter Five, however, that there is a possibility that the biblical text holds other data which are potentially of great relevance to the issues with which we are involved.

3.3.7.1. The Akkadian “Beteuerungspartikel” *lu*

Although the Akkadian particle *lu*, glossed as ‘wahrlich, fürwahr’ (von Soden 1969: 176), ‘fürwahr, etc.’ (Kienast 1994: 236), or ‘indeed’ (*CAD* s.v. *lu* 2.), is more limited in its attestation than many other Akkadian particles, it is nonetheless a familiar element in most periods of both Babylonian and Assyrian, as well as in Old Akkadian. Consider, for example, the following passage, from an Old Babylonian letter from Anam of Uruk to Sīn-muballiṭ of Babylon (Falkenstein 1963: 58, 62³⁸):

| | |
|---|---|
| <i>iš-tu a-na-ku i-du-ú a-na i-na-an-na</i> | ... since I know, to this point, |
| <i>um-ma-na-a-tum ša am-na-an-ja-aḥ-ru-ur</i> | the troops of Amnān-Jaḥ rur twice |
| <i>ši-ni-šu</i> | |
| <i>ù ša-la-ši-šu a-na ti-il-lu-ut bi-tim an-ni-</i> | and three times to the aid of this |
| <i>i-im</i> | house |
| <i>lu is-ni-qá-a-nim 1 li-im 2¹ li-im</i> | <i>lu</i> came here. One thousand, two |
| | thousand, |
| <i>5 li-mi 10 li-mi a-di ga-ma-ar-ti-ši-na</i> | five thousand, ten thousand, |
| | together with their accessories, |
| <i>lu il-li-ka-nim-ma MU-1-KAM MU-2-KAM ù</i> | <i>lu</i> came and one year, two years, |
| <i>MU-3-KAM</i> | or three years |
| <i>i-na li-ib-bi a-lim an-ni-i-im lu wa-aš-ba</i> | within this city <i>lu</i> (were) |
| | stationed. |
| <i>ù¹ sà-bi-um šar-ru-um be-el a-li-šu</i> | And Sābi’um the king, the lord of |
| | his city, |
| <i>qá-du-um 1 li-mi šābim^{bi-a} lu il-li-kam</i> | with one thousand troops <i>lu</i> |
| | came... |

³⁸ The quoted passage is *Bagh. Mitt.* 2 58 iii 29-37.

Old Assyrian examples of the use of *lu* may be seen in the following passage from a commercial document from Kül Tepe (Thureau-Dangin 1928: pl. xxviii³⁹).

| | |
|--|---|
| <i>a-na ku-ta-nim / lu ta-dí-na-ni</i> | [10 shekels...] for <i>kutānum</i> [material] <i>lu</i> you gave me, |
| <i>ku-ta-num / i-na KÙ. BABBAR^{pi}.kà</i> | the <i>kutānum</i> with your silver |
| <i>l[u] ša-mu-ma / É.GAL^{lūm}</i> | <i>lu</i> (has been) bought and the palace |
| <i>lu ú-kà-lu-šu</i> | <i>lu</i> is holding it... |

In these two passages we find seven instances of *lu*. Of these, five are cases of *lu* preceding a finite verb (*lu isniqānim*, *lu illikānim*, *lu illikam*, *lu taddinanni*, *lu ukallû-šu*), while in the remaining two (*lu wašba*, *lu šāmu*) *lu* is found in a stative construction.⁴⁰

Lu figures particularly prominently in Akkadian oath constructions (von Soden 1969: 239-240). As may be seen from TC II 49 (cited above), the predicate of an Old Assyrian oath frequently takes the so-called “subjunctive” form (*taddinanni*, *ukallû-*, *šāmu*),⁴¹ to which *lu* is preposed in the case of non-negative oaths. While the Old Babylonian oath, in contrast, may take a predicate in the form of a simple subjunctive without *lu*, it more frequently agrees with Assyrian in employing *lu*, which precedes either the indicative (endingless) shape (in the case of assertory oaths) or the subjunctive shape (in the case of promissory oaths) of the predicate. In contrast to the dialectal differentiation seen in positive oaths, negative oaths, which use the negator *lā* without *lu*, routinely show subjunctive forms in both assertions and promises (von Soden 1969: 239-240).

3.3.7.2 The Akkadian precative

Akkadian likewise shows the use of an *l*-particle in the formation of wish-constructions. The so-called “precative” constructions consist of the prefixing of *l(u)* to a predicate composed of a noun, a stative verb, or a finite verb.

³⁹ The quoted passage is TC II 49 (= EL 284—see Eißer and Lewy 1930: 324-326), 22-25 (cited by Hecker 1968: 221).

⁴⁰ The stative construction is composed of a predicate substantive provided with suffixes indicating the subject. Frequently, as in these two cases, the substantive is a deverbal adjective (*lu wašba* ‘(the troops, f. pl.) *lu* [are] seated (f.pl.)’, *lu šāmu* ‘(the material) *lu* [is] purchased (subjunctive).’)

⁴¹ The endingless (indicative) form is also not unknown in Old Assyrian oaths, however—cf., e.g., *x ma-na URUDU a-na qá-ti-šu lu a-dí-in* (TC II 17, 30-31) ‘*x* mines of copper to his hand *lu* I gave (*addin*)’ (Hecker 1969: 221).

lu a-wi-lá-tí-ma (KTS 1 b, 11) ‘may you be a man (*awīl-um*)’

With a finite verb, the precative construction consists of *l(u)* placed before the conjugated preterite form of the verb (*iprus*, *uparris*, the formal equivalent to the jussive of **yaqtul*, **yuqattil* of West Semitic).

^{md}LAMMA.NU.ŠEŠ.MEŠ.DÙ DUMU-ú-ka DUMU XVII u₄-mu *bi-in-ni-im-ma lu-rab-bi-ma lu-ú* DUMU-ú-a šu-ú ‘give me your seventeen-day-old son Lamassu-šalam-aḥḥī-ibni, let me raise (*lurabbi*) (him) and let (*lu*) him (be) my son’ (AnOr 8 14: 4-5)

^dUTU ù ^dAMAR.UTU *da-ri-iš u₄-mi li-ba-al-li-tú-ka lu ša-al-ma-ta lu ba-al-ṭa-ta* ‘May Šamaš and Marduk preserve you (*liballifū-ka*) forever, may (*lu*) you be well, may (*lu*) you be living’ (PBS 7 66: 4-6)

When the subject-prefix of the verb begins with a vowel (*a-*, *u-*, *i-*), the particle coalesces with this vowel, the entire particle-verb complex forming a single graphic unit. This coalescence is accompanied by various vowel alterations, which in large part deviate from the rules of vowel contraction otherwise encountered in Akkadian.

In the Assyrian dialect, the precative paradigm maintains a direct, transparent relationship to the preterite paradigm. Compare the following examples, which formally correspond to the preterite forms *tātalkam*, *illikam*, and *uši*, respectively.

lu ta-ta-al-kam (CCT III 14, 21) ‘may she depart’

li-li-kam (BIN IV 8, 27) ‘may he come’

lu-ši(-ma) (TC 18, 41. 44. 46) ‘may he go out’⁴²

The table below juxtaposes the precative and preterite forms for the basic-stem (G) verb *parās-um* (exemplifying the verbal type employing *-a-/i-* for the preradical vocalism) and the D-stem verb *parrus-um* (exemplifying the preradical vocalism *-u-*).

⁴² The examples cited, which are Old Assyrian, are from Hecker 1968: 128-129.

Table 18: Precative and preterite paradigms: Assyrian dialect
parās-um (G-stem) *parrus-um* (D-stem)

| | Precative | | Precative | |
|-------------|-----------|----------------|-----------|------------------|
| | Preterite | | Preterite | |
| 1 Sg. | <i>l-</i> | <i>aprus</i> | <i>l-</i> | <i>uparris</i> |
| 1 Pl. | <i>lu</i> | <i>niprus</i> | <i>lu</i> | <i>nuparris</i> |
| 2 Masc. Sg. | <i>lu</i> | <i>taprus</i> | <i>lu</i> | <i>tuparris</i> |
| 2 Fem. Sg. | <i>lu</i> | <i>taprusī</i> | <i>lu</i> | <i>tuparrisī</i> |
| 2 Pl. | <i>lu</i> | <i>taprusā</i> | <i>lu</i> | <i>tuparrisā</i> |
| 3 Masc. Sg. | <i>l-</i> | <i>iprus</i> | <i>l-</i> | <i>uparris</i> |
| 3 Fem. Sg. | <i>lu</i> | <i>taprus</i> | <i>lu</i> | <i>tuparris</i> |
| 3 Masc. Pl. | <i>l-</i> | <i>iprusū</i> | <i>l-</i> | <i>uparrisū</i> |
| 3 Fem. Pl. | <i>l-</i> | <i>iprusā</i> | <i>l-</i> | <i>uparrisā</i> |

Adding the *l*-particle to a vowel-initial verb form (*aprus*, *iprus*, *uparris*) thus appears to result in the total disappearance of the vowel of the particle. As Huehnergard points out, this disappearance runs counter to the general phonology of Old Assyrian, which ought to have maintained both vowels of a sequence such as **-ua-* intact (von Soden 1969: 18). “Therefore, although it is quite possible, for example, that the 1st sg. D precative *luqattil* might have arisen from **lu-’uqattil*, forms such as the 1st sg. G **lū-’aqtul* and the 3rd masc. sg. **lū-yiqtul* should have remained uncontracted” (Huehnergard 1983: 587).

The Babylonian dialect has introduced several innovations into the precative paradigm. The most conspicuous of these is the abandoning of the distinction between the *a*-preradical verbal type (e.g., the G-stem *aprus*) and the *u*-preradical type (e.g., the D-stem *uparris*) when the *l*-particle coalesces with the verb. Consequently we find, for the first-person singular precative, an initial syllable *lu-* corresponding to both preradical-vowel types (*aprus* and *uparris*), while, for the third person, *li-* corresponds to both *iprus* (*iprusū*/*iprusā*) and *uparris* (*uparrisū*/*uparrisā*).

Table 19: Precative and preterite paradigms: Babylonian dialect

| | Precative | Preterite | |
|-------------|-------------------------------|----------------|------------------|
| | | <i>aprus</i> | <i>uparris</i> |
| 1 Sing. | <i>lu- + -prus, -parris</i> | | |
| 1 Plur. | <i>i</i> | <i>niprus</i> | <i>nuparris</i> |
| 2 Masc. Sg. | <i>lu (i)</i> | <i>taprus</i> | <i>tuparris</i> |
| 2 Fem. Sg. | <i>lu (i)</i> | <i>taprusī</i> | <i>tuparrisī</i> |
| 2 Plur. | <i>lu (i)</i> | <i>taprusā</i> | <i>tuparrisā</i> |
| 3 Sing. | <i>li- + -prus, -parris</i> | <i>iprus</i> | <i>uparris</i> |
| 3 Masc. Pl. | <i>li- + -prusū, -parrisū</i> | <i>iprusū</i> | <i>uparrisū</i> |
| 3 Fem Pl. | <i>li- + -prusā, -parrisā</i> | <i>iprusā</i> | <i>uparrisā</i> |

Babylonian also differs from Assyrian in that in the first-person plural verbal forms it shows a particle *i* instead of *lu* (*i niprus*, *i nuparris*). This *i*

is also found with the second-person forms (*i taprus*, etc.), alongside forms with *lu* (*lu taprus*).⁴³

The Babylonian contracted forms (*lu-prus*, *li-prus*) are phonologically no less unexpected than the Assyrian ones, despite the fact that vowel contractions are a regular part of Babylonian phonology. To be sure, reconstructing (first-person singular) **lu-'aprus*, **lu-'uparris* and (third-person) **lu-yiprus*, **lu-yuparris*—i.e., a particle **lu* + the ancestor of each of the preterite forms in question—will provide us with plausible explanations for (first-person singular) *lu-parris* (< **lu-'uparris*) and *li-prus* (< **lu-yiprus*). The regular contraction rules of Babylonian leave *li-parris* unexplained, however, obliging us to resort to *ad hoc* analogical leveling in order to account for the appearance of such forms.⁴⁴

The discussion surrounding the particle *i* which has replaced *lu* in Babylonian remains no less *ad hoc*. Von Soden describes *i* without comment as “die bab. Kohortativpartikel” (von Soden 1969: 179); no cognate to it has been identified anywhere else in Semitic. Its appearance in conjunction with forms other than the first-person plural has often gone unnoticed, but Babylonian second-person precativ constructions are documented with both *i t-* and *lu t-*.⁴⁵

3.4.1 Reconstructing the precativ paradigm: Huehnergard (1983)

In evaluating the various *l*-particles of Semitic, Huehnergard (1983) draws a basic distinction between independent elements and proclitic elements, based primarily upon whether they are represented graphically as independent words or as prefixes.

⁴³ Old Akkadian shows the same constructions as the Babylonian dialect—cf. 1 sg. *lu-uš-ku-ul-kum* ‘may I weigh out,’ *li-iš-bu* ‘may they stay ($\sqrt{wšb}$)’ (Gelb 1961: 172-173). Old Akkadian does not appear to have known a counterpart to the Babylonian *i*, however (CAD s.v. *lu.4*).

⁴⁴ It has been suggested (Gelb 1961: 173), on the other hand, that *li-parris* results from vowel syncope applying to **lu-yuparris* (via **lu-yparris*). “... [M]ore likely, however, the contraction of **uyu* would result in **ū*: e.g., D stative *tūb* < **tuyyub*. Even if the second *u* were lost through syncope, the sequence **uy* in Akkadian seems to result in *ū* as in *tūbum* < **tuybum šunnūtum* < **šunnūtum*; *šurbūtum* < **šurbuytum*...” (Huehnergard 1983: 587 f. 163).

⁴⁵ Since the precativ is in competition with the imperative in the second person, and since Babylonian has lost the third-person singular form *taprus/tuparris*, precativ constructions with the subject-prefix *t-* (whether with *i* or *lu*) are not common in Babylonian. Such constructions are not mentioned in von Soden’s *Grundriss*, but the *Ergänzungsheft* (1969: 16**) to the *Grundriss* observes, “Für gelegentliches *i* statt *lū* vor dem [ung]B[abylonischen] seltenen *t*-Präfix der 3. Ps. f. s. W. G. Lambert, Atr. 154 (z.B. *i tuktabbit* ‘sie werde geehrt!’; *i taprik* ‘sie soll eingreifen’ AS 16, 286 Rs. 23).” The *i* is restricted neither to Late Babylonian nor to the third person, however—cf. CAD *lu* 1.4.1 I am grateful to Erica Reiner for her comments (p.c.) on these Babylonian forms.

... This division is based on both formal and semantic grounds; it is immediately suggested by the evidence of classical Arabic and the modern South Arabian languages, and is confirmed ... in the remaining languages. [Huehnergard 1983: 569]

We see at once that the facts surrounding the counterfactual particle (including its various derived functional manifestations) favor the reconstruction of an independent word: each language providing an attestation of this element treats its particular reflex as an independent word **law* rather than as a proclitic.

The precative complex affords a less clear picture, however, since, while the bulk of the data points toward proclitic behavior, one of the languages providing the most crucial data, Akkadian, routinely shows an independent element *lu*. Huehnergard (1983) reconciles these facts by reconstructing an original Common Semitic precative proclitic **la-* (corresponding to the Arabic *lām al-'amr*, as well as to the asseverative *la-*, as will be seen below) and a counterfactual **law*. This hypothesized **la-*, Huehnergard suggests, lies at the heart of the Akkadian precative paradigm and is the source of the contracted forms such as Assyrian *l-aprus*, *l-uparris* (< **la-'aprus*, **la-'uparris*) and *l-iprus*, *l-uparris* (< **la-yiprus*, **la-yuparris*), and Babylonian *lu-parris* (< **la-'uparris*) and *li-prus* (< **la-yiprus*). When the contraction did not take place, however—i.e., in verb-forms which began with a consonant, and in verbless constructions such as **la-šalmāta* ‘may you (be) well’—Huehnergard proposes that the expected forms (**la-taprus*, **la-niprus*, **la-šalmāta*, etc.) have fallen victim to a general replacement of **la-* by *lu* (< **law*), the function of which has shifted from the marking of unreal wishes to the marking of wishes of any modality.

... In most of the Semitic languages, there is normally no special particle or construction used to express a wish ... in non-verbal clauses; a simple statement is employed, as in Arabic *as-salāmu 'alaykum* ‘peace be to you.’ The compulsory use of *lū* in such instances in Akkadian is, therefore, apparently due to a weakening of the original contrary-to-fact nuance of the particle; the latter nuance is, in fact, only rarely expressed by *lū* in Akkadian... another particle expressing the “irrealis,” enclitic *-man*, having largely replaced it. Further, a transition in meaning, for example, of *lū awīlāt*... from “would that you were a man” to (may you) be a man,” is not a great one. [Huehnergard 1983: 574]

Huehnergard thus astutely exploits the phonological problems inherent in deriving the contracted verbal forms (*l-aprus*, etc.) from “**lu-* + verb” in order to provide an explanation both for the vowel of *lu* and, by implication, for its status as an independent word in Akkadian.

Finally, for contraction to have taken place, the particle must have been proclitic, and not independent. Yet our survey of particles beginning with *l* has so far not provided evidence of a proclitic **lu-* in any other Semitic language (except perhaps one or two Amorite names); rather, the evidence points only to proclitic **la-* and independent **lū/law*, the latter combining only with negative *lā*. Therefore, despite such analytic forms as *lū taqtul* in Old Akk. and Ass., it is a priori unlikely that *liqtul* is a contraction of **lū-yiqtul*. [Huehnergard 1983: 588]

There remain problems despite Huehnergard's analysis, however. The factors prompting the disappearance of **la-* remain a matter of speculation, and the significance of the semantic shift called for in the development of a particle which is markedly *irrealis* to one which is markedly *potentialis* is not to be underappreciated.

Although it is true that "[a]ll of the extant precativ forms, both Old Akk.-Bab. and Ass., can be derived from **la-yaqtul* by means of normal Akkadian phonological developments and analogical re-formations" (Huehnergard 1983: 588), the developments which must be posited still merit critical evaluation. Even were we to assume that the comparative Semitic data point unambiguously to the form **la-* (which they do not, as we have seen), the positing of a pre-Akkadian **la-* does not render the formal derivation of the contracted precativ forms a simple matter. To a significant degree we must still assume that analogy has played a considerable role in the formation of the Babylonian and Assyrian paradigms as they are attested: in addition to the large-scale replacement of uncontracted **la-* by *lu* (ultimately < counterfactual **law*), we must assume that Babylonian *luprus* has replaced **laprus* on the analogy of *luparris*, and that Assyrian *liprus*, etc., has been restructured on the analogy of the preterite *iprus*, etc.⁴⁶ The Babylonian particle *i* remains unexplained, the product of an unidentified "exclamatory particle" which for some reason has invaded the paradigm.

The independent status of Akkadian *lu* (as opposed to the proclitic character of the precativ particles of the remaining Semitic languages) cannot be divorced from the fact that in general Akkadian shows no sign of proclitic elements. Whereas Arabic (like the remaining western languages) employs proclitics freely—cf. the conjunctions *wa-* and *fa-*, the basic prepositions *li-*, *bi-*, *ka-*, the interrogative *'a-*, the future-tense marker *sa-*, etc.—Akkadian shows either graphically independent words (*u* 'and,' *ina* 'in, from,' *ana* 'to,' etc.) or postclitics (the conjunction *-ma*, the *irrealis*

⁴⁶ Huehnergard takes the transparency of the relationship connecting the precativ and the preterite in Assyrian to result from a set of secondary developments (1983: 588).

particle *-man*, the Assyrian subjunctive *-ni*, etc.) (von Soden 1969: 177-178). Akkadian shows only a limited number of residual proclitics, which are restricted to situations in which a melding of the proclitic to the following word has taken place. The most familiar of these instances lie in the contracted forms of the precative paradigms, but others may be seen, e.g., in the occasional assimilation of a prepositional *n* to a following word (*ip-pa-an* = *ina pān*, *ak-ka-ši-im* = *ana kāšim*) (von Soden 1969: 18, 164).

It is not clear, therefore, what significance is best ascribed to the fact that the Akkadian precative takes the form *lu* when it is not contracted with the verb. While it is possible to follow Huehnergard in hypothesizing that an earlier **la-* has been replaced by the reflex of **law* in Akkadian, we need not regard this as a necessary conclusion. The crux lies in the nature of the vowel of the particle and whether *lu*, with its vowel *u*, must necessarily be ruled out in identifying the Akkadian phonological counterpart to the Arabic *lām al-'amr*. Given the numerous complications bedeviling the discussion of this etymon throughout Semitic, it appears rash to rule out any possibility *a priori*. This includes the possibility that Akkadian *lu* does in fact constitute a formal cognate to Arabic *l(i)-* and the precative particles of the remaining Semitic languages, just as it is their functional counterpart.

3.4.2 Reconstructing the Semitic precative particle

All things being equal, our intuitive reading of the Akkadian precative paradigm has been to view these forms, on the synchronic plane, as composed of an *l*-particle prefixed to a finite verbal form equivalent to the preterite (and to the West Semitic jussive). Following through such an interpretation, it appears *prima facie* most reasonable to take the basic form of the particle to be the form which it assumes in independent (i.e., uncontracted) position, viz. *lu*. We are therefore led to assume that this element *lu* must be associated with a discrete set of (morphophonemic) contraction rules which obtain when the *-u* of the particle comes in contact with those subject-prefixes consisting of a vowel (*a-*, *u-*, *i-*).

This is in all likelihood an appropriate perspective for the synchronic grammar of Babylonian and Assyrian, but it is less certain that it is the proper approach to unearthing the historical development of this construction. The main obstacle to such a view, as we have seen, lies in the fact that we cannot readily account for the forms assumed by the contracted precative if we take **lu* as the historical starting point. Following Huehnergard, we might elect to abandon **lu* in favor of **la-* as the historically underlying form of the particle. This view has the advantage of relieving us of the necessity of positing an earlier **lu-* which is not supported by data elsewhere in Semitic.

Unfortunately, the support which the other Semitic languages provide for reconstructing **la-* as the precativ marker is at best ambivalent. The form *li-* which we find attested in Arabic may only be derived from an earlier **la-* by assuming a development no less *ad hoc* than that prompted by the complications encountered in deriving the Akkadian contracted forms from **lu*.

... Arabic *li-*, as noted above, was an allomorph of **la-* which developed within Arabic itself. (Note that some dialects have *la-* rather than *li-* with *yaqtul*.) We suggest that *li-* resulted from a raising of the *a* in *la-* to *i* before the 3rd pers. verbal prefix *yv-*. Note that the jussive *yaqtul* in Arabic occurs principally in the 3rd pers., much less frequently in the 1st pers., and only rarely in the 2nd. [Huehnergard 1983: 580]

There are, however, no independent grounds for suspecting that **y* would have had any such raising effect upon a preceding vowel *a*, and thus no reason to think that an original **la-yaqtul* would have gone to **li-yaqtul* by any identifiable phonological process.

We have also seen evidence from the contraction of the Aramaic precativ adduced as evidence for the reconstruction of the vocalism of **l-*. The existence of cuneiform *Nebenüberlieferungen* such as *-la-di-in*, however, makes it difficult for us to accept Dion's conclusion that Zincirli forms such as *lmn'* necessarily call for **li-* to have been the underlying shape of the precativ particle, nor indeed do the cuneiform names themselves provide us with any grounds to determine that one or another vowel must have been original for the **l-*.⁴⁷

We thus find that the various Semitic languages provide us with evidence calling for the reconstruction of three distinct vowels for the particle of the precativ construction, all of them phonologically irreconcilable (in terms of the existing *Lautgesetze*) with one another.

⁴⁷ There is a general problem with drawing conclusions on the basis of apparent contraction seen in the initial syllable of the precativ (in Aramaic and elsewhere, as we have seen), since there is no evidence (aside from the phenomena under consideration) to lead us to think that a contraction of this sort would have been a regular development for a prefixed clitic. Contrast the behavior of the Aramaic proclitic conjunctions **wa-* and **pa-*, which show no sign of such a contraction (in e.g., Tell Fekherye *w-yšym* vs. *lšm*). Note that Arabic, which in general agrees with Aramaic in showing the elision of **y* between short vowels (cf. *fatāt-un* 'girl' < **fatay-at-un*), also makes an exception of a *y* preceded by a proclitic (cf. *la-yaf'alanna*, *wa-yaf'alu*, etc.).

- (a) Gə'əz *la-* suggests a proto-form **la-*, which is supported by data from certain of the non-standard dialects of early Arabic.
- (b) Classical Arabic *li-* appears to call for the reconstruction of **li-*.
- (c) Akkadian *lu*, which is surrounded by its own constellation of difficulties, may in principle be traced back to either **lu* or **law*.

Confronted with these options, historians of this problem have been obliged to make a selection based primarily upon educated speculation, and to muster a set of *ad hoc* resolutions to confront the various problems resulting from each selection. We have seen, for example, that, after careful consideration, Huehnergard (1983) chooses **la-* as the original shape of the particle, and must therefore explain why Arabic *li-* and Akkadian *lu* fail to correspond to expectations, while Dion seeks the earlier form of the particle in **li-*.

In addition to the possibility of reconstructing any one of the vowels **a*, **u*, or **i*, however, there is a fourth alternative which has escaped the attention of researchers.⁴⁸ It has been observed above that, when directly following a conjunction, the Arabic *lām al-'amr* generally takes the form *-l-* with no vowel at all (*wa-l-yaktub* 'and may he write'). There is no regular syncope rule in Arabic by which the absence of the *i* may be explained. Given the difficulty of explaining the elimination of the *i*, we may conjecture that it is feasible to reconstruct a bare, vowelless **-l-* as the ancestral shape of the precativ particle.

Positing a vowelless **-l-* as the starting point for the various precativ elements of Semitic enables us to circumvent the various phonological pitfalls which prevented us from selecting one of the attested vowels (**a*, **u*, **i*) over the others as the original. We are also able to provide a means of avoiding the *ad hoc* contraction rules which complicate, for example, the history of the Akkadian paradigm. If we reconstruct the precativ particle simply as **-l-*, we find that the bulk of the problematical "contracted" forms of the Akkadian paradigm fall out automatically with no contractions needed at all, once the subject-prefixes **'-* and **y-* were dropped.

| | | |
|----------|---|---|
| 1 Sg. | <i>l-aprus</i> (> Bab. <i>lu-prus</i>) | <i>l-uparris</i> |
| 3 M. Sg. | <i>l-iprus</i> | <i>l-uparris</i> (> Bab. <i>li-parris</i>) |

I have suggested elsewhere that the "*a-i*" preradical vocalism of the Semitic verb⁴⁹ is a secondary development, and that, at its earliest reconstructable

⁴⁸ The reconstruction of the precativ construction given here has appeared as Testen 1993b.

⁴⁹ I.e., the preradical vowel (either **-a-* or **-i-*, depending upon Barth's law and certain other factors) of the classes of verbs (i.e., the basic stem, its mediopassive derivative in **t-*, and the N-stem, etc.—cf. Akkadian *taprus*, *taptaras*, *tapparis* and Arabic *taf'al-u*, *tafta'il-u*,

stage, Semitic simply prefixed the bare consonantal subject-prefixes (*'-, *t-, *n-, *y-) directly onto the verbal stem (hence *'-ktub, *t-ktub, *y-ktub, etc.)—evidence in support of this analysis may be found in Testen (1994). The third-person prefix featuring *y- at this early stage would therefore have had the shape *i- (i.e., the syllabified counterpart of the semivowel *y), from which the person-prefix *i-* of Akkadian has directly developed.

| | | | | |
|--------------------|---|-----------|---|--------------------|
| Subject (3 m. sg.) | + | Verb-stem | = | Jussive (3 m. sg.) |
| *y- | + | *-qtul | = | *iqtul |

[cf. Akkadian *iprus* (ult. > Arabic *yāqtul*, Hebrew *yiqtol*, etc.)]

If we follow the standard interpretation of the precative as formed by prefixing the *l-particle onto the jussive, we find that the concatenation of a vowelless *l- and a vowelless subject-prefix *y- leads immediately to the observed form of Akkadian (*liprus*), without the necessity of assuming an intermediate process of contraction (*liprus* < ? < *IV-yVprus).

| | | | | | | |
|-----------|---|--------------------|---|-----------|---|----------------------|
| Precative | + | Subject (3 m. sg.) | + | Verb-stem | = | Precative (3 m. sg.) |
| *l- | + | *y- | + | *-qtul | = | *liqtul |

As we have seen, reflexes of this same structure *l-i-qtul- appear across the Semitic languages—cf. (in addition to Akkadian *liprus*) Aramaic *lip'al, Amorite *la-aḥ-wi* (where the vowel of the prefix has been adjusted to conform with Barth's law), Socotri *lik'ber*, Tigre *lašbär*, and perhaps Sabaean *lhwfrnn*⁵⁰—on each occasion challenging us to arrive at some coherent means of deriving this shape from the *IV-yVqtul which we would expect to find if we assumed a particle *IV- (containing a vowel) as the starting point. Given our speculations about the original vowellessness of both *l- and *y-, however, it is entirely possible that the widely attested formation *l-iqtVl- is to be ascribed directly to Common Semitic as a systematic element in the precative paradigm.⁵¹

tanfa'il-u) other than those for which a preradical *u is reconstructed (i.e., the D-stem and the causative-stem, etc.—Akkadian *tuparris*, *tušapris* and Arabic *tufa'il-u*, *tuf'il-u*).

⁵⁰ Is it possible that such a form might ultimately be responsible for some of those cases in Hebrew in which an apparent *lā-* + infinitive is found where one would anticipate a finite verb (cf. Eitan 1922, Nötscher 1953: 377)? A form such as the anomalous *limšo'* of Proverbs 19: 8 (cf. above) may be interpreted as a trace of an ancient *l-iqtul just as easily as it may be emended to *lā-moše' (as Dahood and others have done).

⁵¹ I suspect that the *li-* of Arabic *li-yaktub*, the vowel of which is difficult to explain otherwise, is to be related to this *l-i-. The attested construction presumably results from a blending of the original precative (*liktub) and the more general shape *yaktub(-u)*.

| | | | | |
|---------------|---|-------------|---|------------|
| * (y) i-ktub- | > | * ya-ktub- | > | ya-ktub- |
| * l-i-ktub- | > | * l-i-ktub- | > | li-yaktub- |

Such early Aramaic forms as *-la-an-tur* (with the preradical *a*) presumably result from introducing a generalized preradical vowel into an earlier *l-inθur by the same extension of Barth's law which took place in the other prefixed forms—i.e., *linθur- > *lanθur, just as *(y)inθur- > *yanθur- (see Testen: 1994b).

If the addition of a vowelless **l-* to the prefix **y-* gave rise to **li-*, what would have been the result of adding the **l-* to the remaining prefixes (**'-*, **t-*, and **n-*)? It is suggested here that **l-* preceding an early Semitic obstruent resulted in the appearance of a syllabified **l*—hence **l-^vqtul-*, **l-t^vqtul-*.⁵² What we have hitherto taken to be a series of irregular vowel correspondences (**la* vs. **li* vs. **lu*) may consequently be hypothesized to be the regular reflexes of this **l* in the various descendant languages. The multiplicity of vowels which we find reflecting the ancestral Semitic **l* is thus analogous to the various shapes assumed by the Common Indo-European **l* over the course of the development of the attested Indo-European languages, as may be seen from the reflexes of the reconstructed Indo-European **ul^wo-s* ‘wolf’ nom. sg.

| | | |
|---------------------------|-------------------------|--|
| Indo-European <i>*l</i> > | Balto-Slavic <i>*il</i> | Old Church Slavonic <i>vlikŭ</i> Lithuanian <i>vilkas</i> |
| | Indo-Iranian <i>*ṛ</i> | Sanskrit <i>vṛkaḥ</i> Avestan <i>vəhrkō</i> |
| | Germanic <i>*ul</i> | Gothic <i>wulfs</i> |

The contrast between Ethiopic and (dialectal) Arabic *la*-⁵³ and Akkadian *lu* may be conjectured to reflect the regular developments of **l* in these languages. The Akkadian shape *lu* calls to mind the similarly anomalous correspondence seen in the Akkadian negative particle *ul*, which we may contrast with Gə‘əz *’al-bo* ‘there is not’ and *’ak-ko* (< *’al-ko*) ‘no, is not’ and Jibbali *əl*, as well as with Northwest Semitic **’al* (Biblical Hebrew *’al*, Ugaritic *āl*). The correspondence of Akkadian *u* and Gə‘əz *a* in this negative particle, mirroring that seen in *lu* and *la-*, suggests the possibility of reconstructing the negative particle as an original **’l*, in which case the vowels found attested in these forms would dovetail neatly with our speculations about the existence of an early Semitic **l*.

Barth’s law which took place in the other prefixed forms—i.e., **linθur-* > **lanθur*, just as **(y)inθur-* > **yanθur-* (see Testen: 1994b).

Note that there presumably was originally a distinction between the precativ forms of verbs of the “a/i”-preradical type (**yaqtul*) and those of the *u*-preradical type (**yuqattil*), in which the **y-* should have remained a semivowel before the following **-u-*: basic-stem **liqtul* < **l-i-qtul* vs. D-stem **l(i)yuqattil* < **l-y-uqattil-*, in which we might expect the **-y-* to have remained. Such a distinction is in fact to be found in the Aramaic of the Hadad inscription (contrast the basic-stem *lmn’* [= *limna’*] and the causative-stem *lytk-* [= *liyattik-?*] ult. < **l-yu(h)antik-*).

⁵² The *v* here represents an epenthetic vowel which was inserted in early Semitic to eliminate the unallowable triconsonantal complex. This vowel, it is suggested, ultimately gave rise to the various vowels described by Barth’s law (cf. Testen: 1994b).

⁵³ It may be hypothesized that the distinction between Literary Arabic *li-* and the *la-* of the non-standard dialects may be due to an earlier opposition of **li-* (< **l-y-*) and **la-* (< **l-’/t-*). Evidently Literary Arabic generalized the former, while the dialects in question (to the extent that the limited data allow us to determine) evidently generalized the latter.

It remains difficult to say what the reflex of the posited particle **l* in the other Semitic languages may have been. It may be noted that, while Aramaic kept **li-* (<**l-y-*) throughout much of its early history, the **l-* which we reconstruct for the remainder of the paradigm (<**l-C-*) appears to have been lost without leaving any (recognizable) trace.

| | |
|--|--|
| <i>*y-p'al-</i> → <i>*y(i)p'al-</i> | > Early Aramaic <i>*yip'al</i> |
| <i>*l-y-p'al-</i> → <i>*lip'al-</i> | > Early Aramaic <i>*lip'al</i> |
| <i>*t^vp'al-</i> → <i>*tip'al-</i> | > Early Aramaic <i>*tip'al</i> |
| <i>*l-t^vp'al-</i> → <i>*l-tip'al-</i> | [apparent merger with <i>*tip'al</i>] |

Hebrew shows no trace of a precative particle featuring *l-*, while the evidence supporting the existence of a Hebrew asseverative *l*-particle is at best ambiguous and subject to alternative interpretations. We may hazard one tentative conjecture about the shape which might have been assumed by **l* in Hebrew, based on what we have seen elsewhere in Semitic: if we are correct in regarding the negative *'al* as the Hebrew reflex of a Proto-Semitic **'l*, this implies that we might look for the vowel *a* to appear in the Hebrew reflex of the syllabified manifestation of the *l*-particle. The issue of the Hebrew reflex of **l-* will occupy center stage in the coming chapters.

3.4.3 *The Babylonian cohortative i*

The case for an early Semitic syllabic **l* will be stronger if it is possible to adduce evidence that the syllabicity of **l* was not an isolated anomaly, but rather a manifestation of a broader phonological phenomenon within the ancestral language. While there is no unambiguous evidence for the existence of non-vocalic syllabics in any of the attested languages, we do find numerous occasions in which the extant phonological laws are, to all appearances, violated in the vicinity of the sonorant phonemes. If we allow for the possibility that in general Proto-Semitic sonorants became syllabified in certain environments, it is possible that a number of these cases may be characterized as reflexes of syllabified elements. Rather than having to allow for an inexplicable phonological residue defying the sound laws, we may be led by such forms to expand and refine our notions of what constitutes the regular phonological development of the Semitic languages.

Instances in which the study of historical Semitic phonology might benefit from such an approach are widely scattered but enlightening.⁵⁴ One area which is of particular relevance to the question of the **l*-particle lies in the development of the Babylonian cohortative particle *i* (*i niprus* ‘let us divide’), which does not currently have an etymology. While we cannot say with certainty, there is a good possibility that this *i* is to be associated directly with the problem of the *l*-particle of the precativ.

The handbooks of Akkadian cite several points in the discussion of Akkadian verbal morphology at which a word-initial **n-* appears to have been dropped before **i* or **u* (von Soden 1969: 33, 137), despite the fact that, given the development of Akkadian as a whole, we are not entitled to say that there was any regular sound law by which **#ni-/#nu-* became **#i-/#u-*. The verbal formations in question are the following:⁵⁵

Table 20: Situations in which initial **n-* has apparently been lost in Akkadian

| | Lacking <i>*n-</i> | *Expected | Compare: |
|--------------------------------------|--|--------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| G-stem imperative (roots √nCC) | <i>idin</i> ‘give’ <i>uṣur</i> ‘watch’ | <i>*nidin</i> <i>*nuṣur</i> | <i>piqid</i> <i>purus</i> |
| Gt-stem (non-pref.) (roots √nCC) | <i>itaṭl-um</i> ⁵⁶ ‘watch (recip.)’ inf. | <i>*nitaṭl-um</i> | <i>pitars-um</i> |
| Gtn-stem (non-pref.) (roots √nCC) | <i>itakkus-u</i> ‘cut off (iter.)’ inf. | <i>*nitakkus-u</i> | <i>pitarrus-u</i> |
| Ntn-stem (non-pref.) (all roots) | <i>itaplas</i> ‘look at (iter.)’ imp. | <i>*nitaplas</i> | [cf. Štn-stem <i>šutaprus-</i>] |

It is clear from Arabic that the original form of the imperative of a triradical basic-stem Semitic verb (Arabic (*u*)*ktub* ‘write’ m. sg., (*i*)*fʿal* ‘do’ m. sg.⁵⁷) was not the bisyllabic stem indicated by *piqid* and *purus* but a monosyllabic stem **CCVC*. The early Semitic forms underlying the Akkadian imperatives *uṣur* ‘guard’ and *idin* ‘give’ would thus have been

⁵⁴ See Testen (1993b, 1994a, 1995). An interpretation of the “loss” of Semitic **n* in pre-Akkadian which is substantially the same as that outlined below and in Testen (1993) may be found in Tropper (1997: 195-199).

⁵⁵ The term “non-prefixed forms” refers to those elements in the paradigm which lack the subject-prefixes (i.e., the imperative, the stative, the verbal adjective, and the infinitive).

⁵⁶ The forms cited for Gt are from the Assyrian dialect—see below for discussion of the Assyrian manifestation of the syncope rule in such forms. The corresponding Babylonian forms would be **iṭṭul-u* (rather than **niṭṭul-u*) vs. *pitrus-u*.

⁵⁷ The initial (*u*) and (*i*) of the Arabic forms are the *hamzat al-waṣl*, which is added to eliminate word-initial consonant clusters. The (*u*) and (*i*) are not seen when the word is preceded by a vowel—cf. *wa-ktub* ‘and write.’

**nθur-* and **nTin-*, in which the **n* occupied the first position in a word-initial cluster.

A similar relationship is found between the Akkadian Gt-forms and the corresponding Form VIII verb of Arabic. In light of the Arabic past-stem (*i*)*fta'al-* and the imperative-stem (*i*)*fta'il-*, we may easily hypothesize that the Gt-stem of Akkadian originally contained a similar consonant cluster—i.e., in the Akkadian stem *pitarus-* < **ptarus-* we see the same insertion of a secondary *i*-vowel as is seen in an imperative such as *pqid* < **pqid*. Indeed we find evidence supporting the theory that the first syllable of *pitarus-* is not original in the fact that, in Assyrian, the vowel-syncope rule affects the third vowel of the stem rather than the second vowel (i.e., **pitarus-u* → *pitars-u* rather than **pitrus-u*; contrast the normal syncope in Babylonian *pitrus-u*). Since the syncope rule normally eliminates the vowel of the second of two open syllables, the Assyrian shape of the Gt-stem suggests that at one time the stem *pitarus-* contained only two syllables (**ptarus-*).

Arabic has no counterpart to the Akkadian verbal infix *-ta(n)-*, but it is reasonable to conjecture that in early Akkadian the *-ta(n)-* behaved like the infixed mediopassive *-t(a)-* of the Gt-stem—that is, it was inserted directly after the first consonant of the stem.

| Basic-stem | Infixed <i>-tan-</i> > | via Epenthesis (+ assimilation) |
|---|------------------------|--|
| <i>paris</i> '(it) has been divided' | * <i>p-tan-rus</i> > | <i>pitarrus</i> '(it) has iteratively been divided' |

If we interpret the basic-stem imperative and the non-prefixed manifestations of the Gt-, Gtn-, and Ntn-stems as containing an original consonant cluster, we are able to characterize neatly the environment in which the unusual disappearance of the initial **n-* takes place by stating that the pre-Akkadian cluster **nC-* became **iC-*.⁵⁸ We may hypothesize that **n* became syllabic **n̥* between the word-boundary and a following consonant, the ultimate development into a pure vowel **i* (**u*) being comparable, *ceteris paribus*, to the development of the syllabic nasals of Indo-European into the vowel *a* in the Greek and Indo-Iranian branches—cf., e.g., Indo-European **k̥mtóm* 'hundred' > Greek *he-katon*, Sanskrit *śatam*, Avestan *satəm*.

⁵⁸ John Huehnergard (personal communication) has suggested that the *u-* seen in such G-stem imperative as *ušur* < **nθur-* is due to the analogical influence of the (ultimately epenthetic) *u* of other *u*-theme imperatives—i.e., an early Akkadian **išur* > *ušur* on the model of *purus-* and the many other verbs of its type.

| | | |
|--|--|------------------------------------|
| G-stem imperative (roots √nCC) | <i>idin</i> <i>uṣur</i> (< *iṣur) | < * <i>nTin</i> < * <i>nθur</i> |
| Gt-stem (non-prefixed) (roots √nCC) | Ass. <i>itaṭl-um</i> Bab. <i>iṭṭul-um</i> | < * <i>n-ta-ṭul-</i> |
| Gtn-stem (non-prefixed) (roots √nCC) | <i>itakkus-u</i> | < * <i>n-tan-kus-</i> |
| Ntn-stem (non-prefixed) | <i>itaplas</i> | < * <i>n-ta(n)-plus</i> |

Table 21: Akkadian *i-* (*u-*) < **n-*

The verbal forms in question thus lead us to suspect that, under certain circumstances, an Akkadian *i* may be traced back to an earlier **n*. In the absence of any other available etymology, may we hypothesize that the Babylonian cohortative particle *i* has also arisen from such a syllabic **n*? This **n* in turn may be traced back to the original **l* if we speculate that this syllabic **l* has assimilated to the following *n-* which served as the marker of the first-person plural verb.⁵⁹

**l-niprus* > **n-niprus* > *i niprus* 'let us divide'

The anomalous *i niprus* construction may therefore be regarded as a simple development within the *l*-precativ paradigm, rather than as the inexplicable intrusion of an unexplained *i* into that paradigm. When taken together with the other Akkadian shapes (*lu*, *l-*) which we have hypothesized to be the phonologically regular reflections of a reconstructable particle **l-*, the cohortative *i* affords us a perspective which allows us to identify a simple system underlying the diversity seen in the historically attested language (see Table 22).

The distinction seen between Akkadian *lu/i* and *l-* reflects, it is suggested, an earlier distinction between the shapes assumed by a vowelless element **l* when it was followed by a consonant and that assumed when it was followed by a syllabic element (whether that syllabic was original, as has been suggested above for **li-* < **l-y-*, or due to the loss of the *' of the first-person singular). In a sense, this pattern is the mirror image of what we find in Arabic, where the vowelless form of the *lām al-'amr* depends upon the presence of the preceding vowel (*wa-l-naktub* 'and let us write'). We may presume that the fact that Arabic is sensitive to the preceding environment represents the survival of a factor in the original phonological

⁵⁹ Apparent parallels to this process of assimilation are discussed in Testen (1993b). Similar phenomena also seem to underlie portions of the pronominal paradigm, where Akkadian forms such as *attina* 'you (f. pl.)' (= Arabic '*antunna*', Hebrew '*atten*') seem to go back to **antṭnā* < **ant-ṭn-nā* (compare the masc. pl. **ant-m-ū*) (Testen 1995).

Table 22: Development of the precative paradigm in East Semitic

| | *Early East Semitic | | *Common Akkadian |
|-----------|-----------------------|-----|-------------------------------------|
| 1 sg. | *l-(<i>'a</i>)prus | ... | *l-(<i>a/u</i>)prus ⁶⁰ |
| 2 m. sg. | *l-taprus | ... | *lu taprus |
| 2 f. sg. | *l-taprusī | ... | *lu taprusī |
| 3. m. sg. | *l-yprus | ... | *liprus |
| 3. f. sg. | *l-taprus | ... | *lu taprus |
| 1 pl. | *l-niprus > *n-niprus | > | *i niprus |
| 2 pl. | *l-taprusā | ... | *lu taprusā |
| 3 m. pl. | *l-yprusū | ... | *liprusā |
| 3 f. pl. | *l-yprusā | ... | *liprusā |

system which has been lost in the remaining Semitic languages—observe the same sensitivity, for example, in the *sandhi*-forms of the Arabic imperative ((*u*)ktub vs. *wa-ktub*) vs. the generalized *kaṭob* of Hebrew and *purus* of Akkadian. In the earliest form of Semitic, we may conjecture, the asseverative-precative *l was governed purely by the nature of its phonological environment (*l → *...C/C...), regardless of any boundaries which may have been present.

The distinction seen between Akkadian *lu/i* and *l-* reflects, it is suggested, an earlier distinction between the shapes assumed by a vowelless element *l when it was followed by a consonant and that assumed when it was followed by a syllabic element (whether that syllabic was original, as has been suggested above for *li- < *l-y-, or due to the loss of the *' of the first-person singular). In a sense, this pattern is the mirror image of what we find in Arabic, where the vowelless form of the *lām al-'amr* depends upon the presence of the preceding vowel (*wa-l-naktub* 'and let us write'). We may presume that the fact that Arabic is sensitive to the preceding environment represents the survival of a factor in the original phonological system which has been lost in the remaining Semitic languages—observe the same sensitivity, for example, in the *sandhi*-forms of the Arabic

⁶⁰ It is difficult to say what would have been the expected East Semitic outcome of a Proto-Semitic sequence *l- + *'-prus-. On the one hand, it is conceivable that Babylonian *luprus* would have developed regularly through *l(')prus, and that Assyrian *l-aprus* arose secondarily through the analogical influence of *aprus*—in this case, the *lu- common to both *luprus* and *luparris* (vs. *aprus*, *uparris*) might have served as the starting point for the general collapse of the *a-* and *u-* verb-classes throughout the Babylonian precativ. On the other hand, if an epenthetic vowel was introduced prior to the loss of the *' the Assyrian *l-aprus* might represent the original East Semitic form (*l-'prus > *l(')prus > *l-aprus*). In the latter case, the development of *l > lu would evidently have taken place subsequent to the loss of the *' marking the first-person singular, since we might otherwise anticipate an Assyrian *luaprus < *l-'aprus.

imperative ((*u*)*ktub* vs. *wa-ktub*) vs. the generalized *ka₂ob* of Hebrew and *purus* of Akkadian. In the earliest form of Semitic, we may conjecture, the asseverative-precative **l* was governed purely by the nature of its phonological environment (**l* → **...C/C...*), regardless of any boundaries which may have been present.

The development of Babylonian *i* < **l* provides us with a reminder of one of the corollaries of the investigation of regular phonological change: the final result of a sequence of phonological developments need not necessarily be transparently relatable to the starting point. The change of an original **l* into something in which the various features characterizing “*l*-ness” have all been lost or transformed beyond recognition is not an unknown phenomenon (cf., e.g., the *u* of Serbo-Croatian *vuk* ‘wolf,’ ult. < **u₁lk^w-os*). It should be borne in mind, therefore, that in principle the end product of an original Semitic **l* in any given language may well be something which, on the surface, shows little or no similarity to its starting point. It may well be the case, therefore, that further reflexes of the Semitic **l*-particle are still to be identified in the corpus of material on hand. Possible candidates for such identifications will be found discussed in the following chapters. The case for the interpretation of any phenomenon as related to the issue of the **l*-particle must rely less on the presence of an *l*-like entity in the attested data than on the rigor and systematicity of the chain of developments underlying the claim.

CHAPTER FOUR

ON THE DEFINITE ARTICLE

4.1 Introduction: The Arabic definite article

The definite article of Classical Arabic takes the form of a proclitic prefixed to nouns and adjectives, assuming one of the following environmentally conditioned forms:

| | After a preceding vowel | Elsewhere |
|---|-------------------------|------------|
| Before “lunar” (<i>qamariyya</i>) letters | <i>l-</i> | <i>al-</i> |
| Before “solar” (<i>šamsiyya</i>) letters | <i>C-</i> | <i>aC-</i> |

Here “C” indicates the initial consonant of the word to which the article is attached. When the word in question begins with one of the so-called “solar” set of consonants (i.e., the apical elements *t, θ, d, δ, r, z, s, š, ṣ, ḍ, ṭ, ẓ, l, n*), the article thus features a gemination of this consonant—e.g., *aš-šams-u* ‘the sun’ nom., *ar-rajul-u θ-θāliθ-u* ‘the third man’ nom. (lit. “the-man-nom. the-third-nom.”)—although the traditional orthography retains the *l*. In contrast, words beginning with one of the remaining consonants (the “lunar” set, i.e., *ʾ, b, j, ḥ, x, ʿ, f, q, k, m, h, w, y*) display the forms *al-* or *l-*—e.g., *al-qamar-u* ‘the moon’ nom., *al-marʾat-u l-xāmisat-u* ‘the fifth woman’ nom.

The distinction between the postvocalic forms of the article and those found elsewhere (*-l-/C-* vs. *al-/aC-*) is correlated with the position of the article in the utterance. More frequently than not, Arabic words end in a vowel; moreover, when a word ends in a consonant, a sandhi-vowel is introduced before any following consonant cluster (such as is constituted by the prefixation of the article *-l-/C-* to a word)¹—e.g., *katabat-i l-kitāba* ‘she wrote the book’ ← *katabat* + *l-kitāba*. The forms *al-* and *aC-* are consequently limited to the initial position of an utterance. This alternation of utterance-initial VCC- and non-initial -CC- is familiar elsewhere in

¹ In a limited number of situations, there is a vowel implicit in the word which appears in the position before such clusters—cf. the *-u* which appears after the pronominal plural ending *-um*: *raʾaytum-u l-binta* ‘you (m. pl.) saw the girl’ vs. *raʾaytum bintan* ‘you (m. pl.) saw a girl.’ In such cases, the added vowel represents the survival of one which was historically present but has generally been lost—thus the final *-u* associated with Arabic *-um* may be traced back to a Common Semitic **-ū* (cf. the endings of Gəʿəz *rəʾi-kəmu* ‘you (m. pl.) saw,’ Biblical Hebrew *qəṣal-tū-nī* ‘you (m. pl.) killed me,’ etc.; note also the shape of the Arabic ending before a pronominal object (*raʾaytumū-hā* ‘you (m. pl.) saw her’)).

Arabic phonology, the graphic representation of the vanishing V- being known as the *hamzat al-waṣl*, the ‘glottal stop of the juncture.’ What distinguishes the syllable of the utterance-initial shapes of the definite article from the canonical manifestations of the *hamzat al-waṣl* is the quality of the vowel: for the article, the vowel is the low vowel *a*, while in the case of all other words the vowel of the VC- is *i* or, in certain verbal situations, *u*.²

Table 23: The *hamzat al-waṣl* of Arabic: Phonology vs. spelling

| | Initial position | Non-initial position (after <i>wa-</i> ‘and’) |
|-----------------|-------------------------|--|
| ‘the-girl’ | <i>al-bintu</i> <’lbnt> | <i>wa-l-bintu</i> <w’lbnt> |
| ‘(a) son’ | <i>ibnun</i> <’bn> | <i>wa-bnun</i> <w’bn> |
| ‘he departed’ | <i>inṭalaqa</i> <’nṭlq> | <i>wa-nṭalaqa</i> <w’nṭlq> |
| ‘write!’ m. sg. | <i>uktub</i> <’ktb> | <i>wa-ktub</i> <w’ktb> |

Contrast the behavior of the *hamzat al-waṣl* with that of the normal stable *hamza* (*hamzat al-qaṭ’*, ‘the glottal stop of severing’), such as is found in the first-person singular subject prefix: ‘*anṭaliqu* ‘I depart’/‘*wa-anṭaliqu* ‘and I depart’; ‘*aktubu* ‘I write’/‘*wa-aktubu* ‘and I write.’³

The *hamzat al-waṣl* has long been interpreted as an epenthetic syllable introduced to remove a consonant cluster from the initial position.⁴ As a result of this added syllable, the syllabic inventory of Arabic is relieved of the necessity of encompassing syllables of the structure CCV(C)- (i.e., *ibnun* ‘son’ consists of two closed syllables rather than a single *CCVC syllable). The curious vocalic quality (*a*) of the article has long attracted attention, however: while Sībawayh took the article to consist solely of the *l-* itself (with the *a-* being essentially the same as the prothetic V- of *ibnun*, *uktub*, etc., i.e., an extraneous syllable introduced to alleviate the unacceptable CC in the initial position of, e.g., **l-bintu*), al-Xalīl b. ‘Aḥmad interpreted the article as ‘*al-* (i.e., with the *hamza* as an integral part of the article). The latter interpretation thus viewed ‘*al-* as a particle with the shape CVC (essentially comparable in configuration to *bal* ‘rather’

² For verbs the prefixed vowel is *i* before a syllable containing *i* or *a* ((‘*i*)*nṭalaqa* ‘he departed,’ (‘*i*)*ḍrib* ‘beat!’), but *u* before a syllable with *u* (‘*u*)*ktub* ‘write!’ (‘*u*)*stuḡbila* ‘he was met’); for non-verbs the prefixed vowel is normally *i* throughout ((‘*i*)*bn-un*, (‘*i*)*bn-an*, (‘*i*)*bn-in* ‘son’ nom., acc., gen.).

³ In the following discussion I shall use the apostrophe ‘ to mark the true etymological glottal stop (‘*aktubu*), while *hamzat al-waṣl* will be left unexpressed, with a word-initial vowel (*uktub*).

⁴ In other words, to use the traditional grammarians’ terms, it is necessary to add the *hamzat al-waṣl* when the initial letter of a word is to be read with *sukūn*—i.e., when the initial consonant is not followed by a vowel.

or the interrogative particle *hal*), differing from these only in that the *hamza* of the article systematically undergoes lenition in certain positions.⁵

It would be a simple task to relate the four forms assumed by the definite article of Classical Arabic (*l-/al-/C-/aC-*) to one another if it were not for the facts that (a), as we have seen, we do not expect a *waṣl*-syllable to contain the vowel *a*, and (b) a Classical Arabic *l* does not generally assimilate to a following dental consonant, as it apparently has in, e.g., *ar-rajulu θ-θāliθu* 'the third man.' Outside of the article, Arabic *l* shows no regular capacity for assimilation (contrast, e.g., the article in *as-sinn-u* 'the-tooth' nom. (spelled *al-sinnu*) vs. '*alsinat-un* 'tongues' nom./indef.⁶ This fact has led to the appearance of two general schools of thought on the history of the article, with some researchers following the traditional grammarians in seeking the article's original shape in the *l*-forms such as *al-bintu*, while others, inspired by material from further afield in Semitic research, have opted to see in the geminate-C forms such as *as-sinnu* the key to the historical interpretation of the Arabic article.

4.2 The Arabic definite article as an **l*-particle

In *Die Pronominalbildung in den semitischen Sprachen* ([1913] 1967) Jacob Barth traces the Arabic article back to the particle *la-* which was the subject of the earlier chapters of the present study.

... Ebenso geht der arab. Artikel *al* von *la* aus; denn am Anfang stehend wird er *al* gesprochen, nicht *il*, gegenüber andern Formen des *Alifu'lwaṣli*... ([1913] 1967: 77-78)

... Im Arab. lautet [the article] im Satzbeginn *al* (Mufaṣṣal 169, 14), nicht *il*; daher ist, da der ursprüngliche Vokal vorgeschlagen ist (darauf weist das *Waṣla* im Binnensatz), die Grundform *la*. Im Binnensatz geht sein Vokal hinter dem des vorangehenden Worts verloren...[[1913] 1967: 134-135]

Barth thus adroitly exploits the unexpected presence of the *a* of *al-* in order to provide an etymology for the article: since a *waṣl*-syllable ought to

⁵ Cf. al-Zamaxṣārī (cited by Ullendorf 1977: 167): *wa-hāḍihi l-lāmu waḥdahā hiya ḥarfū l-ta'rīfi 'inda sībawayhi wa-l-hamzatu waṣlun maḥlūbatun li-l-ibtidā'i bihā ka-hamzati bnun wa-smun wa-'inda l-xalīli 'anna ḥarfa l-ta'rīfi 'al ka-hal wa-bal wa-'innamā stumirra bihā l-taxfīfu li-l-kaḥrati*.

Sībawayh (1965/1317: 410) observes, however, that when a particle ending in a vowel is placed before the initial *al-* a full *hamzat al-qaṭ'* is pronounced between the vowels: '*a-fa-'allāhi la-taṭ'alanna* 'so, by God, will you do?' *yā 'allāhu ʔfir li* 'O God, forgive me!'

⁶ See below, however, for Sībawayh's discussion of the assimilation of *l* in non-standard forms of older Arabic.

contain *i* or *u*, the *a* of the article must be from somewhere else, and the assumption of an underlying **la-* provides a convenient source. The article as we know it, in Barth's view, results from imposing upon the underlying particle **la-* either a metathesis (in the case of **la-* occurring in the utterance-initial position) or a syncope.⁷

*# *la-bintu-* > **al-bintu* > *al-bintu* 'the-girl' nom.
 **wa-* *la-bintu* > **wa-l(a)-bintu* > *wa-l-bintu* 'and-the-girl' nom.

The difficulty with Barth's interpretation is that there is no independent justification for either the metathesis or the syncope. As we have seen in Chapter One, there is no dearth of instances in which the particle *la-* is found unaltered in Literary Arabic, with no trace of these processes whatsoever to be seen—cf., e.g., *la-'in kašafta 'annā l-rijza la-nu'minanna laka wa-la-nursilanna ma'aka banī 'isrā'ila* (VII 134) 'la-if you remove the penalty from us, *la-we* will believe in you, and *la-we* will send the Banū 'Isrā'il with you.' Moreover, although it may be argued that both metathesis and syncope are documented processes in Arabic phonology, they typically take place only in the environment of identical, or at least homorganic, consonants—cf. the metathesis seen in *yaruddu* ← **yardudu*, or the optional syncope in *iššaddaq* ← **tšaddaq* ← *tašaddaq* (cf. Ambros 1993). The proposed development of **la-* into *al-/l-* would thus be restricted to the status of a phonological *hapax*. In light of these problems, Barth's theory has exercised most of its influence through the reactions which it has generated from subsequent researchers.

4.3.1 Semitic comparanda: The Hebrew article

In addition to the Arabic article (and to the Tigre article to which Barth compares it—see below), a number of the West Semitic languages display determination-markers which share intriguing similarities with that of Arabic. Foremost among these is the definite article of Hebrew, the basic form of which is *haC-* (where C indicates the first consonant of the word to which the article is prefixed).⁸ Despite the formal discrepancies between the

⁷ In support of his derivation of the Arabic article from **la-*, Barth adduces the Tigre article, to be discussed below (Barth [1913] 1967: 132). The bearing of the Southwest Semitic material, including that of Tigre, on the issue of the definite article will be considered below.

⁸ In addition to the basic *haC-* (e.g., *hab-bāyit* 'the-house,' *ham-mēlek* 'the-king'), there are a number of other allomorphs of the Hebrew article. When the following consonant is one of those which do not allow gemination (i.e., a laryngeal, a pharyngeal, or *r*), the article does not introduce a following *dageš* (the marker of a geminated or fortis pronunciation)—

Arabic *al-/aC-* and the Hebrew *haC-*, the syntactic behavior of the two elements within their respective noun phrases is strikingly similar: in both languages the article is prefixed to both the noun and any attributive adjectives present, and, in both Hebrew and Arabic construct chains (i.e., sequences composed of a head noun followed by a modifying genitive), both *al-/aC-* and *haC-* are prefixed only to the last noun of the chain.

| | | | | | | |
|------------------------------|------------|---------------|---------------|-------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| 'the land' | <i>al-</i> | ' <i>arḏ-</i> | <i>u</i> | | | |
| | <i>hā-</i> | ' <i>āreṣ</i> | | | | |
| | the- | land | (nom.) | | | |
| 'the great land' | <i>al-</i> | ' <i>arḏ-</i> | <i>u</i> | <i>l-</i> | <i>kabīrat-</i> | <i>u</i> |
| | <i>hā-</i> | ' <i>āreṣ</i> | | <i>hag-</i> | <i>gəḏōlā</i> | |
| | the- | land | (nom.) | the- | great-f. | (nom.) |
| 'the king of the great land' | | | | | | |
| <i>malik-</i> | <i>u</i> | <i>l-</i> | ' <i>arḏ-</i> | <i>i</i> | <i>l-</i> | <i>kabīrat-</i> |
| | | | | | | <i>i</i> |
| <i>mēlek</i> | | <i>hā-</i> | ' <i>āreṣ</i> | <i>hag-</i> | <i>gəḏōlā</i> | |
| king- | (nom.) | the- | land | (gen.) | the- | great-f. |
| | | | | | | (gen.) |

In addition to the behavior which they share within the syntax of their respective noun phrases, the articles of Biblical Hebrew and Classical Arabic share the peculiarity of being used (in each language, only exceptionally) to mark relative clauses.⁹

qəṣīnê 'anšê ham-milḥāmā hε-hāḷəḵû 'ittô (Joshua 10: 24) 'the army commanders who had come (*hε-hāḷəḵû*) with him'
way-yišmaḥ... 'al *ha-heḵīn hā'ēlohīm lā'ām* (II Chron. 29: 36) 'And he rejoiced at what God had done (*ha-heḵīn*) for the people'
ṣawtu l-ḥimārī l-yujadda'u 'the voice of the ass that has his ear, or ears, cut off (*al-yujadda'u*)'
man lā yazālu šākiran 'alā l-ma'ah 'whoso ceases not to be grateful, or thankful, for what is with him, or what he has (pausal for *al-ma'ahu*)...'

ha-hódeš 'the-month.' The vowel of the article was also influenced by its environment: we find *qameš* (*ā*) rather than *pataḥ* (*a*) before ' and *r*—*hā-'āḇ* 'the-father,' *hā-ro(')š* 'the-head'—as well as before ' (unless it is followed by an unaccented *qameš*) and *h* (if it is followed by an accented *qameš*) (cf. *hā-'īr* 'the-city,' *hā-hār* 'the-mountain'); the vowel *ε* is found before -'ā- and -hā-, when these are not accented—*hε-'ārīm* 'the-cities,' *hε-hārīm* 'the-mountains'—and before -hā- and -hō- (with *qameš ḥatūḡ*)—*hε-hāḡ* 'the-festival,' *hε-hōreḇōḡ* 'the-wastelands.' The absence of gemination with certain consonants and the dissimilation of vowels (which are echoed elsewhere in the phonology of Hebrew—cf. *hiṭṭehārū* 'they purified themselves' (2 Chr. 30:18: pausal form) < **hiṭṭahhārū*)—appear to be general phonological phenomena in Hebrew, and thus need not be treated specifically in a discussion of the article. It will be seen, however, that the fact that the *h* of the article is regularly elided in certain circumstances—cf., e.g., *l-am-mēlek* 'to-the-king'—is of considerable significance to the general issue of the article; this phenomenon will be addressed below.

⁹ The Hebrew passages below are cited by Waltke and O'Connor (1990: 248-249); the Arabic passages are from Lane (s.v. '*al*'), who is quoting, in the case of the first example, al-'Azhārī and Ibn Hišām and, in the case of the second, Ibn Hišām and Ibn 'Aqīl.

The articles of Hebrew and Arabic do not appear under exactly identical circumstances—e.g., Hebrew attributive demonstratives, like adjectives, take a preposed article (Hebrew *hā-'îš hag-gāḏōl haz-zeʰ* ‘the-man the-great the-this (m.)’) while Arabic demonstratives do not (*hāḏā r-rajulu l-kabīru* ‘this (m.) the-man (nom.) the-great (m. nom.)’).¹⁰ Nonetheless, the obvious similarities connecting the means of marking definiteness in these languages has led to the conviction on the part of many researchers that these phenomena must all ultimately be traced back to a common ancestor. Wright thus comments:

... Its original form was, in all probability, [hal], a compound of *hā* and *l*, nearly in the sense of the Latin *ille*, connected with the adverbs [*hālā'ā*] “away,” “beyond,” and [*hālom*] “here,” “hither.” In Hebrew the *l* was assimilated to all following letters; and when the doubling wholly ceased to be audible, the loss of it was compensated by the heightening of the vowel into *ā*..., as in [*hā'îš*], [*hehar*], [*hā'îr*], [*hāro(')š*], on which and other modifications of the article see your Hebrew grammars...

The Arabs originally weakened the initial [h] to ['] but restricted the assimilation of the final *l* to a following dental, sibilant or liquid... The Arabian Bedouins are still said to retain the old pronunciation *hal*, saying *has-sanah* instead of *as-sanah*, [*haššānā*].¹¹ Generally speaking, however, the initial *elif* is regarded as so weak in sound that it suffers elision whenever another word precedes... [Wright 1966: 114-115]

A derivation of *haC-* and *(a)l-/(a)C-* from an original **hal-* runs counter to the phonological development of both Hebrew and Arabic, however. Just as in Arabic, we have little reason to expect the complete assimilation of a syllable-final **l* to a following consonant in Hebrew, and the proposed weakening of **h > ' > Ø* is likewise not a normal development in Classical Arabic. Nevertheless, the search for a means to reconcile the shapes of the Hebrew and Arabic definite articles has continued.

4.3.2 Semitic comparanda: The article in the remaining Canaanite languages and in Aramaic

A definite article clearly akin to that of Hebrew is to be found in inscriptions in Phoenician (Dhorme 1950; Segert 1976: 107-108) and Moabite, both of which show a preposed *h-* as the marker of determination.

¹⁰ For discussion of some of the problems involved in defining the function of the Hebrew article see Barr (1989) and A. Müller (1991).

¹¹ As Nöldeke, the editor of Wright's lectures, noted, Wright has confused the dialectal demonstrative construction *hā* - + article + noun with the simple article.

Cf. the following passages from the inscriptions of Yhwmlk of Byblos and Mš' of Moab (KAI 10 and KAI 181, respectively):

... *hmzbh nhšt zn 'š bh[...]* *n z whpth hrš zn 'š 'l pn pthy z wh'pt hrš...* (KAI 10: 4-5) '... this bronze altar (*hmzbh*) which is in this [...], and this golden (door?) (*hpth*) which is opposite my (door?), and the golden winged sun (*h'pt*) ...'
w'ltm bh mbq' hšhrt 'd hšhrm (KAI 181: 15) 'And I fought against it from (the) daybreak (*bq' hšhrt*) until (the) noon (*hšhrm*)'

Considerably more complicated is the issue of the relationship between the article of the Aramaic languages and those of the other Semitic languages. Rather than being prefixed to the word, the Aramaic article takes the form of a suffixed *-ā*. This provided the Aramaic substantive with a paradigm consisting of three "states." Cf. the following paradigm for *šappīr*- 'beautiful':

Table 24: Paradigm of the "states" of Aramaic

| | Masc. Sg. | Fem. Sg. | Masc. Pl. | Fem. Pl. |
|-------------|-----------------|-------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------|
| Absolutus | <i>šappīr</i> | <i>šappīrā</i> | <i>šappīrīn</i> | <i>šappīrān</i> |
| Constructus | <i>šappīr</i> | <i>šappīrat</i> | <i>šappīray</i> | <i>šappīrāt</i> |
| Emphaticus | <i>šappīr-ā</i> | <i>šappīrāt-ā</i> | <i>šappīrayy-ā</i> ¹² | <i>šappīrāt-ā</i> |

The determining value of this *-ā* has been lost in the Eastern Aramaic languages (cf. Syriac *malkā*, which serves as the basic lexical form regardless of definiteness), but in, e.g., the Biblical Aramaic opposition of indefinite *mēlek* (< **malk*) vs. definite *malk-ā* the original function of *-ā* is still clearly perceptible.

Whether the postposed *-ā* of Aramaic is to be related to the prefixed *haC-* of Hebrew has remained open to debate. Since Hupfeld's (1839: 448-451) discussion of the article, a number of researchers have traced both *haC-* and *-ā* back to a common **hā*, which became grammaticalized as the definite article in one or another position relative to its substantive.¹³

Die urspr. Form des Artikels ist wohl im Aram., wie im Hebr... **hā*, aber dieses Demonstrativelement wurde im Aram. dem Nomen nicht prä-, sondern suffigiert. Durch diese Neubildung hat das Aram. eine allein für die Sprach-sippe charakteristische Flexionsform, den sog. Status determinatus (od. emphaticus) erhalten. [Bauer and Leander [1927] 1981: 84]

¹² In certain of the Aramaic languages we find *-ē* rather than *-āyyā*, presumably as the result of contraction of the latter (cf. Syriac *šappīr-ē*).

¹³ See the discussion of the older literature in Barth 1896: 7-8.

There is ample evidence supporting the reconstruction of a Semitic demonstrative particle **hā*: cf. Arabic *hā-ḍā* (m.), *hā-ḍihi* (f.), *hā-'ulā'i* (pl.) 'this/these,' Syriac *hā-n(ā)* (m.), *hā-de* (f.) 'this,' *hāw* (m.), *hāy* (f.) 'that.' It is not clear that Hebrew *haC-* could actually have developed from such a form, however. Hebrew provides no clear parallel to the putative transformation of vowel length into gemination which lies at the core of the argument. Moreover, Barth, while accepting **hā* as the source of *haC-*, objects to the notion of relating this to Aramaic *-ā* and finds himself obliged to reconstruct **'ā*.

... Ein Anhalt dafür, daß dieses *ā* etwa auf *hā* zurückginge, ist nicht zu ersehen. Da das Aram. keine Fälle aufweist, in denen ein *h* in der Schrift spurlos elidiert wäre, da in Fällen wie *dāmūtā* auch keine Assimilation des *h* an des *t* vorliegt, weil das Aram. überhaupt eine solche nicht kennt, auch das *t* nicht die Aspiration verliert, ist das Wahrscheinlichste, daß der Artikel *'ā* war und sich zu dem hebr. Artikel ebenso verhält, wie phön. [*<'z>*] zu hebr. [*ha-zze^h*]. [Barth [1913]1967: 134]

4.4 The apparent weakening of **h-*

Those who adopt an interpretation of *haC-* and *-ā* (and perhaps ultimately the Arabic article) which derives these elements from an original **hā* or **hal* must recognize not only that the phonological behavior of the **h* is noteworthy by virtue of the form of the Aramaic suffix, as Barth observed, but that the apparent elision of **h* recurs throughout the issue of the definite article. In Biblical Hebrew we find that the *h-* of the article is systematically omitted in the presence of a preceding prepositional clitic (*bə-*, *kə-*, *lə-*), with the vowel of the article directly attached to the consonant of the preposition (e.g., *l-am-mélek* 'to-the-king,' *b-ā-'āreš* 'in-the-land' rather than **lə-ham-mélek*, **bə-hā-'āreš*).¹⁴ In this, the article contrasts sharply with other words beginning in *h-*.

'āšer šiwwā YHWH 'et-mošeh^h bə-har sînāy bə-yôm šawwoṭô 'et-banê yiśrā'el lə-haqrîḥ 'et-qārbānêhem l-YHWH bə-midbar sînāy (Lev. 7: 38) 'which God commanded Moses at Mount Sinai (*bə-har sînāy*) on the day of His commanding the children of Israel to offer (*lə-haqrîḥ*) their oblations to God in the desert of Sinai'

Lambdin (1971b: 326-330) makes a good case for suspecting that a similar disappearance of the *h-* took place in early Phoenician as well. In the case of

¹⁴ Isolated instances of the retention (or restoration) of the *h* of the article are found "almost exclusively in the later Books" (Gesenius 1910: 112).

Phoenician, however, the elision seems to have had a much broader scope than in Hebrew: the Phoenician *h*- seems to have been lost not only with the clitic prepositions *b*-, *l*-, and *k*-, but also with independent prepositions such as *'l*/*'lt* 'on' and *l*/*'n* 'before' (*'lt mzbh zn* 'on this altar' KAI 10: 11-12), frequently with the conjunction *w*- and the definite object marker *'yt* (*w'm z* 'and this people' KAI 26: IV, 7), and apparently also within the construct chain (*kl 'ln qrt* 'all the gods of the city' KAI 26: III, 5). Lambdin notes that the graphic *h*- which we would expect as the representation of the article is inexplicably absent from such constructions, despite the fact that we have no reason to believe that the article should have been excluded from these environments. He proposes therefore that Phoenician, unlike Hebrew, has regularly elided the *h*- of the article in these situations, leaving the article unexpressed in the consonantal script of the texts—i.e., *w'm z* 'and this people' is to be read as *(*)w-a'-amm az-zV ← *wa-(h)a'-amm- (h)az-zV*, to be contrasted with Hebrew *wə-hā-'am haz-ze^h*. In each of these constructions we may consequently assume at least the theoretical possibility of an article *(*)-aC-*. Lambdin finds particularly interesting those cases which contain a plural *nomen regens*.

Since '*n* and '*ln* are undoubtedly plural constructs (i.e., **'ênê* ['the eyes of'—DT], **ilānê* ['the gods of'—DT]), the allomorphy of the Phoenician article was closer to that of Arabic than that of Hebrew, in that the vowel after the initial *h* seems also to have been syncopated: **la'ênê 'ilānim*, **kul 'ilānê qqart* [Lambdin 1971b: 329]

Compare Phoenician *kl 'ln qrt* and its Hebrew analogue *kāl 'ēlohe^h hā-'ir* 'all (of the) gods (of) the-city.'

In short, we have reason to believe that in the Canaanite languages the *h* of the article was something different from the normal *h*, in that, in close juncture with a preceding element, the *h* of the article showed a clear and atypical tendency to vanish. Under the circumstances, we may note that in the ancient North Arabian language Lihyanite, the article of which *(h)(n)-* has been compared to the Canaanite article, we find the occasional appearance of *'*- in the place of the normal *h*-.

... Ein sicheres Beispiel ist [*'špht*] 67, 2, wofür in einer ganz ähnlicher Stelle (58, 2) [*hšpht*] steht. Demnach darf man auch [*w'l h'sn*] (21, 4) gleich stellen [*wā'il al-yassān*] und dies für eine andere Schreibung ansehen von [*w'l h'sn*] 1,1 [Müller 1889: 14]

Once again, we find the *h*- of the article defying the normal behavior of the phoneme *h*.¹⁵ The fact that the *h* of the article so routinely flouts the normal phonology of these languages may be counted both in favor of the derivation of these languages' articles from a common source and against a simple derivation from **h*-. While it is tempting to collect all of these stray anomalies and regard them all as manifestations of a single, unified anomaly, in the end we are nonetheless left confronting the end result of this approach: a proto-article whose **h* displays an inexplicable and disconcerting tendency to fade away into nothing.

4.5.1 Wensinck (1931): Dissimilation and the Arabic article

Barth rejects the idea of connecting the Northwest Semitic **hā*/**'ā* with the Arabic article, which, as we have seen, he elects to trace back to **la*. Others who held similar views of the Northwest Semitic data were not reluctant to incorporate Arabic *(a)l*-(*a*)C- into the argument, however. In the absence of a regular rule of assimilation governing Arabic *l*, Wensinck (1931) proposed that, in principle, of the two competing shapes of the Arabic article (*(a)l*- vs. *(a)C*-) the latter could just as plausibly be argued to be the original. Starting from a Hebrew-like proto-form **haC*- (which he ultimately derived from an original **hā*), Wensinck suggested viewing the attested form of the Arabic article as the end product of a series of dissimilation processes.

At the outset the tribes of Northern Arabia used the article *h* which—just as in the Canaanite languages, according to Barth—was originally followed by an *ā*. Gradually *ā* was reduced to *ā* and in consequence of this shortening the first consonant of the following word was reinforced by way of compensation.

In the Safaitic dialect *hā* may have maintained itself before gutturals. In other dialects, however, dissimilation took place into *han* before gutturals and semi-gutturals, these sounds being less liable to reinforcement than others, as is attested by the way in which they are treated in Hebrew and, to a certain extent also, in Aethiopic.

Hesitatingly the form *han* began to shift into the cognate form *hal*. Gradually, however, *hal* grew the usual form in connection with gutturals, semi-gutturals and also with labials among numerous tribes.

The next change was that of *ha*, *hal* onto 'a, 'al. [Wensinck 1931: 54-5]

¹⁵ In Phoenician too we find the *h* of the article turning into ' , ' , or *h* in the later language ('-*h**dr*t 'the-chamber,' 'm-*m*q*m* 'the-place'). This, however, seems to reflect the general tendency of later Phoenician and Punic to lose distinctions within the laryngeals and pharyngeals, rather than from any peculiarity of the article itself (Segert 1976: 62).

Wensinck supports this view of the article by adducing evidence from the epigraphic relics of one of the ancient languages of northern Arabia, Liḥyanite. While Liḥyanite, like the Canaanite languages, shows *h-* as the article with most nouns (*hbt dh* 'this house,' *hšn'* 'the builder'—Müller 1889: 13), it regularly employs a form written *hn-* when the noun begins with ' or ' (or, occasionally, *q*) (Winnett 1937: 16-18).

*hjbh hn'*ly 'dky m'd *hjbh hn'sfl*... (JS 72, 6-7) '... the highest mountain
(*h-jbh hn-*'ly) as far as the side of the lowest mountain (*h-jbh hn-sfl*)
...
hmḵdr whn'nk (JS 54, 3) 'the plan (*h-mqdr*) and the foundation (*hn-*
'nk)'

As we have seen, the laryngeals and pharyngeals of Hebrew (as well as *r*) systematically fail to undergo gemination. Wensinck proposes that a similar restriction upon gemination was responsible for the *hn-* of Liḥyanite: whereas in most cases the Liḥyanite article featured the gemination of a following consonant (e.g., *hbt* = (*)*hab-bēt*, like Hebrew *hab-báyit*), when the consonant in question was ' or ' the gemination gave way, through dissimilation, to prenasalization (*-'', *-'-' > -n'-, -n'-).¹⁶ The same, he argues, was evidently the case before the sound *q*, "which in some dialects [of Arabic—DT] is pronounced as a guttural" (Wensinck 1931: 6).¹⁷

Wensinck supports his contention that the geminated allomorph represents the original manifestation of the article by noting that across the modern Arabic dialects the "solar" (i.e., assimilating) class of sounds is considerably broader than what is seen in Classical Arabic. In addition to the dentals of the classical language (*t, θ, d, δ, r, z, s, š, ṣ, ḍ, ṭ, ḫ, l, n*), we find gemination with the reflex of *j* (in many dialects), with the velars (in Cairo), and even with the labials (in Ḍhofar).

So reinforcement appears to be used in connection with all kinds of consonants, with the exception of the gutturals proper; in connection with these the article is always *l*.

¹⁶ Parallels to the putative secondary nasalization are documented in Aramaic—cf. Biblical Aramaic 'inda' 'I know,' Egyptian Aramaic *šnpr* 'bird.' See, however, Spitaler (1952-1954) for other interpretations of such forms.

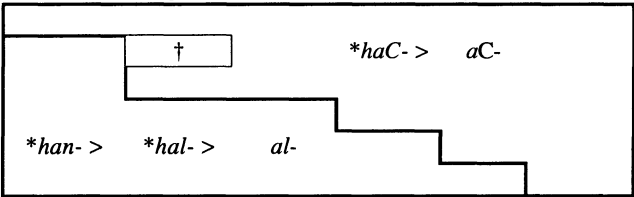
¹⁷ Wensinck is presumably referring to such modern Arabic dialects as Cairene Arabic, in which the cognate to Classical Arabic *q* is '. The only example of Liḥyanite *hn-* before *q* appears to be *hnqbr dh* (JS 81) 'this tomb,' the *n* of which Winnett (1937: 18), however, ascribes to the fact that there is a line break between the *n* and the *q* (contrast *hqbr* in Caskel 45, 2, cited in Ullendorff 1977: 69 fn. 7).

It goes without saying that this fact is not of an accidental nature; it reminds us at once of the circumstance, that also in Hebrew the gutturals are the only group of consonants which is not liable to reinforcement... [Wensinck 1931: 48-49]

In Wensinck's view, the appearance of *-l-* in the Arabic article represents an expansion of the dissimilated manifestation of the article from its original environment before the laryngeals and pharyngeals (as still reflected, in his view, by Liḥyanite) to the extent which it ultimately reaches in Classical Arabic (i.e., everywhere save for the pre-dental environment). The various dialects have preserved evidence of the transitional stages along the path of this expansion (see Table 25).

There are difficulties with this model of the development of the article, however. One problem lies in the inadequacy of our understanding of the old North Arabian material: one cannot rule out the possibility that at least some of the instances of *h-* and *hn-* should be read as counterparts to the demonstrative rather than to the article (cf. the construction *hā-l-kitāb* 'this book' found in a number of modern Arabic dialects); the Liḥyanite *hn-* has also been compared to the Syriac demonstrative *hānā* (Blake 1942: 117, citing Jaussen and Savignac, *Mission Archéologique en Arabie* 2, 451) < **hā-dānā*. Although such potential interpretations are not likely to rule out a comparison of *h(n)-* and *(a)l-/(a)C-* categorically, their existence is symptomatic of the degree to which the grammar of the language underlying the ancient Arabian inscriptions remains unclear.

Table 25: Assimilation in the articles of early Arabian languages and Arabic dialects

| | Guttural | <i>qāf</i> | Labial | <i>kāf</i> | <i>jīm</i> | Dental |
|------------------|---|------------|--------|------------|------------|--------|
| Safaitic |  | | | | | |
| Liḥyanite | | | | | | |
| Dhofari | | | | | | |
| Cairene | | | | | | |
| Moroccan | | | | | | |
| Classical Arabic | | | | | | |

†See footnote 17 above.

While it is true that the Arabic dialects vary as to their delineation of the "solar" class of consonants, the situation is not as arbitrary as it might appear. The Classical Arabic "solar" consonants form a coherent, homorganic set of dentals. The fact that there are dialects in which this set has been expanded to include the reflex of *jīm* (e.g., Moroccan *ẓ-ẓīb* 'the-pocket' vs. Classical Arabic *al-jayb-*) is not surprising, in light of the shift of **j* > **ḟ*, which provides a voiced counterpart to the solar *ṣ*; the expansion of the set to the velars *k* and *g* in Cairene is no doubt to be

associated with the shift of $*j > g$. The dialects which contain the most elaborate “solar” sets (e.g., Dhofar *eb-bint*, *ef-f(e)gîr*—Rhodokanakis 1911: 110) are all confined to a discrete area in the extreme south of the Arabian Peninsula (Yemen, Oman); the restriction of these dialects to the southern periphery of the Arabian Peninsula suggests that we are in the presence of a local areal phenomenon rather than a feature of relevance to the general development of Arabic.¹⁸ It should be noted, incidentally, that certain of these dialects include the laryngeals and pharyngeals among the consonants triggering assimilation.¹⁹ Given such forms, it begins to look somewhat arbitrary to posit the “gutturals” as the putative starting point for the *n*-/*l*-form of the article.

The more traditional view, which takes the dialectal deviations from the Classical “solar” set to represent expansions of the range of the assimilation of *l*, is thus just as much in harmony with the dialectal material as an interpretation which views the variation across the dialects as the encroachment of an originally highly restricted *l* at the expense of the gemination. Indeed, the “degemination” approach to the Arabic article assumes a series of unexpected phonological developments: even leaving aside the problem of whether a shift of $*h- > *- > *Ø-$ may be considered normal for Arabic, we must still posit a dissimilation of “gutturals and semi-gutturals” through nasalization ($*-''- > *-n'-$) and a further development of this secondary nasal into *l*. Neither of these phenomena is supported by our current understanding of Arabic phonology. The impetus for the initial degemination—the apparent incompatibility of the Lihyanite laryngeals and pharyngeals with gemination, which is held to be analogous to what is found in Hebrew phonology—is entirely foreign to Arabic, in which gemination occurs with these consonants just as it occurs with the others (cf., e.g., *baḥḥara* ‘travel by sea,’ *lahhaba* ‘kindle,’ *sa''āl-un* ‘inquisitive’). Neither Arabic nor indeed Lihyanite provides unambiguous support for tracing the *l* of the Arabic article back to gemination: not only is there little if any independent evidence of a shift of $*n > l$ in the history

¹⁸ Wensinck’s claim incorporates a chronological dimension as well as a dialectal one, in that he implies that the older the dialect (e.g., Lihyanite), the closer to the reconstructed original is the form of the article. He grants, however, that the fourth-century al-Namāra inscription already employs the modern form (spelled ‘*l*’) (Wensinck 1931: 55); in addition, it is noteworthy that the recently discovered inscription of ‘En ‘Avdat, which is dated to the first half of the second century A.D., already shows ‘*l*’ in ‘*lmwt*’ for *al-mawt*—‘death’ (Negev, Naveh, and Shaked 1986).

¹⁹ Cf., from al-‘Udain in North Yemen, *aḥ-ḥagar* ‘der Stein,’ *aḥ-ḥuṭbah* ‘die Brautwerbung’ (Diem 1973: 94), and, from the vicinity of Sa‘da, *ih-hōd* ‘die Hochzeit,’ *i'-inīs* ‘das Trockenfleisch,’ *ih-harīwit* ‘die Braut’ (Behnstedt 1987: 86, 166). Cf. likewise Šaraf al-Dīn 1970: 64.

of Arabic, but even in Liḥyanite the *l*- shape of the article, the presumed precursor of the Arabic article, is vanishingly rare, making it difficult to see how it could have ultimately ousted both the earlier **n*-article and the bulk of the instances of the geminated article which this view takes to have been the historical prototype.²⁰

4.5.2 Further views on dissimilation

Despite the shortcomings of the “degemination” approach to the interpretation of the Arabic article, it continues to recur, in one form or another, in the literature on the subject. Ullendorff’s 1965 study,²¹ developing the views expressed in his Master’s thesis written twenty-five years previously, presents essentially the same attitude toward the relation between the geminated and *l*-forms of the article as Wensinck does.

... It is not, therefore, *l* (let alone *’l*) and its assimilation to the “sun letters” that constitutes the original mark of definiteness in Arabic; it is, in fact, the doubling or lengthening of the initial consonant of a noun which connotes “determination” (though doubling was suspended in a minority of cases, that is with laryngeals, thus leading to the appearance of *l* as a *dissimilatory* phenomenon). It seems to me, therefore, that the true explanation of the genesis of the Arabic definite article is diametrically opposed to that generally canvassed... [Ullendorff 1977: 168]

²⁰ In the case of the instances of the Liḥyanite article *hl*- which Wensinck cites, both are from JS 158 and both involve words containing the radicals *h* and *m*.

... In the inscriptions themselves we find instances of the [*<hl>*], the missing link between [*<h>*], [*<hn>*], and and later Arabic *-l*. In a Liḥyanitic inscription we find

[*<hlhmq>*] ‘le jardin de légumes’
[*<hlhmy>*] ‘le *ḥimā*’

Here the form [*<hl>*] is still used before the guttural. In a Thamudic inscription [*<hl>*] occurs before the *kāf*:

[*<hlktb>*] ‘this inscription’ (Wensinck 1931: 53)

Caskel (1954: 68) notes, “In der jüngsten liḥyanischen Inschrift [JS 71] kommt zweimal der ar Artikel al vor, und zwar ohne Alif geschrieben, weil er mit dem Vorhergehenden lautlich verbunden ist.” The forms in question are *blḥgr* ‘in el-Higr’ and *fxfr hlgb* (= fa-ḥaffarahu-l-gibill) ‘hat ihm die Volksversammlung den Schutz der Straße... übertragen.’ Caskel seems to think of these *l*-articles as borrowings from Arabic rather than as an indigenous development of *h(n)*-.

²¹ Citations are from the 1977 reprint of the article.

Rundgren (1989) likewise follows Wensinck's lead, although he prefers to consider the initial opposition to be one of "tenseness" vs. "laxness" rather than of gemination.²² While they adopted Wensinck's view of gemination, both Ullendorff and Rundgren differ from him in their reconstruction of the article itself. Wensinck, it will be recalled, followed Barth in taking the historically underlying form of Hebrew *haC-* to have been **hā-*; unlike Barth, he included the Arabic article among the offshoots of this element. Rundgren preferred to take the Arabic article to have developed from an earlier article **'a-*, a remnant of which he also saw in Arabic nouns and adjectives with prefixed *'a-* (*'abhār-un* pl. of *baḥr-un* 'sea,' *'aḥmar-u* 'red' m. sg.)—"the relationship obtaining between this *'a-* and Proto-Semitic *ha-* being not quite clear it seems safest to posit two separate elements with about the same function" (Rundgren 1989: 267).

Ullendorff, in contrast, reconstructs no underlying element at all for the article. The original marker of definiteness, in his view, lay not in the introduction of any particle but simply in a suprasegmental alteration in the manner of expressing the word to be rendered definite.

It appears to me that the basic feature of definiteness in early Hebrew (and Canaanite) and early Arabic consisted of the apportionment of stress or prominence, additional length or intensity, to the first consonant of the noun to be defined. As a contextual phenomenon, prothetic or glide vowels were inextricably allied to this process, but only later did these vowel elements combine with dissimilatory consonantal inserts to establish a new definite article... [Ullendorff 1977: 170-171]

In other words, Ullendorff suggests that, if we go back far enough, we will find that definite nouns were simply characterized by some form of "intensity" in their articulation, this intensity being realized phonetically as a gemination of the initial consonant (**kalb-* '(a) dog' vs. **k:alb-* '(the) dog'). What we take to be an article (e.g., *haC-*) is, by this view, actually the product of the processes required of the language in order to realize this intensity of articulation (*hak-kēlēb*, *al-kalb-* < **(V-)k:alb-*). The initial consonant (*h*, *'*) of the article is thus entirely extraneous—as Ullendorff observes (concerning the Phoenician article *h-*, *'-*), "the 'consonantal'

²² "... For the important thing is that the receiver is able to perceive a difference between two units in pertinent opposition. This difference may then be founded on length or on intensity. Thus I would like to use the terms lax/tense for *qāla raḡul/qāla r:aḡul*, i.e. non-intensity/intensity..." (Rundgren 1989: 266). Rundgren's justification for this interpretation of the Arabic data is based upon Spitaler's (1952-1954) analysis of Aramaic orthographic conventions, and is not, it appears to me, of great relevance to the issue at hand.

element merely served as a graphic device or vowel carrier à la *hamzat al-waṣl*" (Ullendorff 1977: 170).

Lambdin (1971b) similarly believes that the significant exponent of definiteness at an earlier stage of West Semitic was the intensity of the initial consonant, but in his view this intensity had a segmental origin. In a thought-provoking study noteworthy for the attention which it devotes to the reconstruction of syntax as well as morphology, Lambdin suggests that the Northwest Semitic data indicate that definiteness, in the form of articulatory intensity, first took root in the grammar in constructions composed of a noun followed by a demonstrative or by a relative pronoun, in which a particularly "close juncture" connected the elements (**malkuḏḏū* 'this king,' **malkuḏḏū ra'aytuhu* 'the king whom I saw' vs. simple **malk(-uM)* 'king').

... With the phonological loss of final short vowels before juncture, and the concomitant loss of case distinctions, the short vowels trapped in these constructions, like those in a similar situation before the pronominal suffixes, achieved a neutral state in *-a-*: **malkaḏḏ-*, pl. *malakīm/na''il-*. [Lambdin 1971b: 322]

From this stage the gemination expanded to encompass attributive adjectives and, ultimately, the noun itself. Lambdin seeks the ultimate source of the gemination characteristic of "close juncture" in the final nasal element characteristic of the early Semitic substantival declension (cf. Akkadian *kalb-um*, 'dog' nom. sg., Arabic *kalb-un* id.), which he assumes has assimilated to the postnominal element. In Lambdin's judgment, this same final nasal ultimately gave rise to the *l-* of the Arabic article.

... In the forerunners of Classical Arabic... *M* in close juncture assimilated completely to the dental and interdental stops and spirants, as well as *l* and *n*, but became *l* before the remaining consonants. This statement is, of course, anachronistic; the first assimilation involved only the initial consonants of the relatively small number of words that could stand in close junctural relationship with a preceding noun. These included, at least, the forerunners of *ḏū* and its plural *'ul-*... [Lambdin 1971b: 332]

All of these views reflect the conviction that, in one manner or another, the article of Arabic and those of the Northwest Semitic languages are to be traced back to a common source. They have been guided by the observation that the correspondence of *(a)l-/ (a)C-* and *haC-*, etc., does not fit in with our current understanding of the historical phonology of Semitic, and have therefore felt compelled to offer a set of hypothetical assimilations and/or dissimilations as putative emendations to our view of Semitic phonology.

Discussions of the question of the *(a)C-*manifestations of the Arabic article, which feature so prominently in the views of the researchers who

assume that some form of “degemination” lies at the heart of the article, have not taken into account the description of this problem found in Sībawayh’s discussion of *l*. While the total assimilation of *l* to a following consonant is not a regular feature of Arabic phonology, Sībawayh makes it clear from his treatment of *al-’idyām* (“assimilation”) that sporadic assimilations of this sort were not unknown in his time. After presenting a discussion of the well-known behavior of the definite article he adds,

... When it is other than the *lām* of determination, such as the *lām* of *hal* and *bal*, then the assimilation in some cases is better than others (*fī ha’dihā ’ahsan*)—hence your saying *haira’ayta* [for *hal ra’ayta* ‘did you see?’], because [the *rā’*] is the closest letter to the *lām* and the one most resembling it. For these two are like two letters with the same point of articulation (*maxraj*), since there is no letter more similar to and closer to the *lām* than [*rā’*], just as there is no letter more similar to and closer to the *ṭā’* than the *dāl*. But if you do not contract them but say *hal ra’ayta*, this is a dialectal characteristic of the speech of the people of al-Hijāz, and is [likewise] permissible Arabic (*fahya ’arabiyya jā’iza*). [The assimilation of *lām*] is permissible with the *ṭā’*, the *dāl*, the *tā’*, the *ṣād*, the *zāy* and the *sīn*, but not with the same frequency as with *rā’* because they are distant from it, coming from the middle incisors (*al-ṭanāyā*) and there being no withdrawing from [these teeth]. The permissibility of the assimilation stems from the fact that the final part of the point of articulation of the *lām* is close to their point of articulation, as they are letters of the tip of the tongue. [Assimilation of *lām*] is permitted with the *ḥā’*, the *ṭā’* and the *dāl*, but not with the same degree of acceptability as with [the dentals], because [the interdentals] are from the edges of the middle incisors and are close to the point of articulation of the *fā’*. The assimilation is permitted [with the interdentals] because they are from the incisors just as the *ṭā’* and its sisters are, and because they are the letters of the tip of the tongue just as [the dentals] are. The assimilation with [the interdentals] is weaker (*’aḍ’af*) and is more powerful with *ṭā’* and its sisters because the *lām* does not come down to the sides of the tongue, just as *ṭā’* and its sisters do not.²³ It is very weak with the *qād* and the *ṣīn*, since the point of articulation of the *qād* is the front area of the edge of the tongue, while that of the *ṣīn* is at its middle area. But the assimilation of the *lām* is permitted with these two on account of what we have

²³ The text is unclear here. Schaade, on the recommendation of Praetorius, suggests reading *’aṭrāf al-ṭanāyā* ‘the edges of the *incisors’ rather than *’aṭrāf al-lisān* ‘the edges of the tongue’—“weil [l] ebensowenig bis zu den Spitzen der mittleren Schneidezähne... hinabkomme, wie [t] und seine Genossen” (Schaade 1911: 74 fn. 55). Perhaps it would be less disruptive textually to read <’lls’n> *al-lisān* ‘the tongue’ as <’l’sn’n> **al-’asnān* ‘*the teeth.’

mentioned to you about the connection of their points of articulation. Tarīf b. Tamīm al-ʿAnbarī has said:

| | |
|--|---|
| <i>taqūlu ʿidā stahlaktu mālan li- laḏḏatin</i> | <i>fukayhatu haššayʿun bikaffayka lāʿiqu</i> |
| Says Fukayha, when I have squandered money for joy, | ‘Is there anything (<i>haš-šayʿun</i>) remaining in your palms?’ |

by which he means *hal šayʿun*, but he has assimilated the *lām* to the *šīn*. And ʿAbū ʿAmar read *haθθuwwiba l-kuffāru* ‘will not the unbelievers have been paid back...?’ [LXXXIII: 36], meaning thereby *hal θuwwiba l-kuffāru*, but he has assimilated [the *lām*] to the *θāʾ*. As for the *tāʾ*, it is as I have mentioned to you, and likewise for its sisters. Someone has read (*qurīʿa*) *battuʿθirūna l-ḥayāta l-dunyā* ‘nay, you prefer the life of this world’ [LXXXVII: 16, for *bal tuʿθirūna*], assimilating the *lām* to the *tāʾ*, and Muzāhim al-ʿUqaylī has said:

| | |
|---|---|
| <i>fa-daʿ ḏā wa-lākin hattūʿinu mutayyaman</i> | <i>ʿalā ḏawʿi barqin ʿāxira l-layli nāṣibī</i> |
| Leave that! But will you give aid (<i>hat-tuʿinu</i>) to one enthralled | At a flash of fatiguing lightning at the end of night? |

meaning *hal tuʿinu*. The assimilation with the *nūn* is less acceptable (*ʿaqbaḥ*) than with all of these letters, because [the *nūn*] assimilates to the *lām*, just as it does to the *yāʾ*, the *wāw*, the *rāʾ* and the *mīm*. For they do not dare to remove [*lām*] from those letters which have in common the fact that *nūn* assimilates to them, and it has come to be like one of them in this respect. [Sībawayh II: 416-417]

Strictly speaking, therefore, we are not entitled to single out the assimilation of Arabic *l* as a peculiarity of the article, except to the extent that it is only in the article that the assimilation is obligatory. As long as there are instances of forms such as *har-raʿaytu* documented alongside *hal raʿaytu*—in which it could hardly be claimed that *hal* has arisen secondarily from **har-*—the case in favor of the (a)C- manifestation being the original shape of the article loses much of its grounding. The reason for the generalization of the assimilation of *l* specifically in the case of the article, whereas elsewhere it simply constitutes an allowable alternant, remains an interesting question, but one which is liable to have to do as much with the historical development of the Arabic literary language as with its prehistory.²⁴

²⁴ It is not impossible that the assimilation of the *l* of the article at one point had a more complex dialectology than the literary language reveals. Sībawayh’s characterization of the

4.6.1 Barth's **la-* reconsidered

Barth, as we have seen, chose to take the beginning point for the Arabic article to be the particle *la-*, the original role of which he felt to be that of a demonstrative—"Es weist meist auf Entfernteres hin: 'dort, jener'" (Barth [1913] 1967: 77). In addition to seeing this demonstrative element in the article, Barth took traces of it to be embedded in such Arabic constructions as the relative pronouns (m. sg. *al-la-ḍī*, f. sg. *al-la-tī*, and plural *al-la-ḍīna*) and various demonstratives ('that' m. sg. *ḍā-li-ka*, f. sg. *tī-l-ka*, 'those' *'ulā-li-ka*, 'there' *hunā-li-ka*). To the extent that there is a "demonstrative" nuance to these constructions, this nuance is probably better ascribed to the presence of the demonstrative pronominal **δV-* itself rather than to the *la-*, since in the absence of this element the role of *la-* seems to be that of a marker of the category of "status," as we have discussed above in Chapter Two. We need not therefore adopt Barth's interpretation of the basic function of *la-* as fundamentally that of a deictic.

More important, however, is the possibility of a formal connection between the article and *la-* which Barth articulated. It was suggested above in Chapter Three that there are grounds for a plausible reconstruction of the Proto-Semitic forebear to the asseverative-*cum*-precativ particle as simple vowelless **l-*. There are similarly clear advantages to reconstructing such an **l-* for the article. For example, such an underlying form enables us to avoid positing an anomalous syncopation rule of the sort envisioned by Barth.

**wa- l-bintu* > *wa-l-bintu* rather than
**wa- la-bintu* > **wa-l(a)-bintu* > *wa-l-bintu* 'and-the-girl' nom.

If we do not reconstruct an original vowel after the **l-*, there is no need to produce an *ad hoc* rule to remove it.

Similarly, we may use the reconstruction of a vowelless **l-* to interpret the transparent relationship between the *al-/aC-* shapes of the article and the *hamzat al-waṣl*: just as the introduction of the initial vowel of a word such

absence of assimilation seen in *hal ra'aytu* as specifically Hijāzī (*hiya luḡu li-'ahl al-hijāz*), as well as the fact that the poets whom he cites for the assimilation of *l* stem from more easterly tribes ('Anbar, 'Uqayl), suggests the possibility that at an early stage the article might have had more limited assimilatory properties in the western dialects than in the eastern ones. Might the conventional modern orthography (in which the *l* is graphically retained even with the solar letters) reflect an early dialect in which the assimilation was more restricted than it is in the literary language? The graphic history of the article, in connection with which a diacritic *šadda* (mark of gemination) has been introduced to indicate the assimilation to the "solar" letters, might thus mirror the development of the orthographic conventions relating to the diacritic *hamza*, which seems to have been added to a consonantal script springing from a dialect in which the glottal stop had largely been lost. For a comparison of the morphology of the article in the dialect of the Qur'ān with that of Literary Arabic see Testen (to appear b).

as *ibn-un*, *ism-un* or *uktub* (< original Semitic **bn-um*, **šm-um*, **ktub*) reflects the language's ridding itself of syllables beginning with a **#CC*-sequence, the introduction of the vowel *a*- of the article may be ascribed to the language's response to the prospect of such sequences resulting from the prefixing of **l*- to a consonant-initial substantive.

- (1) **#bn-um*, (2) **#l*- + **#kitāb-u*- >
- | | In onset position | In context |
|-----|-----------------------|----------------------|
| (1) | ' <i>ibn-u</i> - | - <i>bn-u</i> - |
| (2) | ' <i>al-kitāb-u</i> - | - <i>l-kitāb-u</i> - |

A crucial difference distinguishing the article from the typical instance of *hamzat al-waṣl* lies, as we have seen, in the quality of the vowel which appears in onset position. The presence of the vowel *a* in the article cannot be divorced from the appearance of the same vowel in the *lām al-ta'kid* and (at least dialectally) in the *lām al-'amr*. If we are correct in taking the vowels of these particles to be historically secondary intrusions arising out of the syllabicity of an original **l*, we may adopt the same approach toward the vowel of *al-/aC*-. The distinction which we find between the Arabic article in utterance-initial position and in context may thus be taken to reflect an earlier distinction between those phonological environments which forced the original **l* to become syllabified and those which did not.

- | In onset position (#_) | In context |
|---|--------------------------------|
| <i>*#l</i> - + <i>kitābu</i> - → | <i>*-l</i> - + <i>kitābu</i> - |
| <i>*l-kitābu</i> - > ' <i>al-kitābu</i> - | = - <i>l-kitābu</i> - |

The reason for the appearance of '*al*' < **l*, rather than the shape *la*- assumed by the **l* which underlies the asseverative particle, remains the subject of conjecture. There are, however, cases known from the history of other languages in which what is reconstructed as a syllabified sonorant **R* assumes as its attested form either VR or RV, with the reason for the differing outcomes at times unclear—cf., e.g., Classical Greek *kardia* 'heart' (< **krd*-) vs. Homeric *kradiē*.

At the same time, the fact that the sensitivity to the context seen in the article—as reflected in its stock of environmentally conditioned allomorphs ('*al*-'*l*-'*aC*-'*C*-)—has no counterpart in the asseverative particle suggests that the article might be a better source of information on the details of the development of **l* than the *la*- is, since under its general form *la*- the latter particle may well have subsumed any context-sensitive distinctions which might have formerly existed. It might be speculated, for example, that there

originally existed a distinction between the development of **l* into **la* in most positions but into **al* before the homorganic dentals,²⁵ and that an earlier opposition of, e.g., **al-šams-u* (contextual **-l-šams-u*) vs. **la-qamar-u* (contextual **-l-qamar-u*) has given way to the attested situation by means of the generalization of **al-* to replace **la-*. In the absence of a far better understanding of the intermediate stages in the development of Arabic, however, we must conclude that such a reconstruction is by no means the only one conceivable. For our present purposes it suffices to observe that, while the differing syllabic structures of the article and the asseverative particle pose a complication, they do not necessarily gainsay the possibility that these two shapes have arisen from a common source **l*.

4.6.2 *On the development of the marking of definiteness*

Barth's derivation of the article from *la-* was predicated upon his interpretation of the latter as a constituent of the demonstrative system. Since in numerous languages the demonstrative system has provided the raw material for the creation of a definite article—cf., among the large number of available examples, French *le, la* < Latin *ille, illa*—in principle this is also a reasonable avenue of conjecture in a discussion of the Arabic article. The evidence in support of an analysis of Arabic *la-* as a demonstrative is rather tenuous, however, and in Chapter Two in the discussion of the function of this particle it was found appropriate simply to refine and define the more traditional view of *la-* as an element indicating “emphasis” (*al-ta'kid*).

Does the return to a view of *la-* as essentially “emphatic” not compromise Barth's case for associating *la-* and the definite article? As Huehnergard observes, “The shift from asseverative particle to definite article seems an unlikely transition, although it may be argued that both have essentially deictic functions” (Huehnergard 1983: 580 fn. 91).²⁶ While we may readily envision the development of an article out of a demonstrative, it might be less obvious that a particle whose basic role we have taken to be the conveying of the speaker's commitment to the veracity

²⁵ Compare, for example, the variation in the shapes of the verbal Forms V and VI for roots containing an initial radical belonging to the dental obstruent or sibilant classes—cf. V *tafa'* *al-a*, VI *tafā'* *al-a*, but *iṭṭayyarnā* (XXVII: 47) ‘we augur evil’ (vs. *taṭayyarnā* XXXVI: 18), VI *iddāraka* (XXVII: 66) ‘it reached’ (vs. *tadāraka* LXVIII: 48) (see Ambros 1993).

²⁶ Huehnergard is referring here to Hetzron's attempt to derive the Tigre article from the asseverative particle, but the same reservations would presumably be relevant to an analogous derivation for the Arabic article.

of his utterance provides a plausible source for a marker of substantival determinedness.

It is generally agreed that the Semitic ancestral language should be reconstructed without a definite article, and that the articles seen in the attested languages have resulted from later developments (e.g., Barth [1913] 1967: 132). This does not, however, entail that the various concepts associated with the category of “definiteness” were necessarily alien to this early phase of Semitic, since an article is only one means by which a language may express such significant distinctions.²⁷

Theoretical discussions of the role of the definite article often allude to the natural correlation existing between definiteness and such discourse-pragmatic concepts as the “theme” or “topic.” It is not the purpose of the present study to venture at length into these much-debated realms. It will suffice for our purposes simply to note that in a number of languages which contain some means of marking definiteness we find a clear connection between the expression of definiteness and that entity within the sentence (the “topic”) about which the utterance serves to provide new information. This is not surprising, since one of the characteristic features of the topic is that it anchors the upcoming utterance in the prior discourse, rooting the new material in the information which is already present the consciousness of the interlocutor, frequently by virtue of having occurred recently in the preceding discourse. All other things being equal, in a sequence such as “The man opened the door and found a dog on the porch” the appearance of the articles in “the man” and “a dog” identifies one of the participants as being familiar to the hearer in some way and the other participant as newly introduced. The article is one of the primary means enabling us to single out “the man” as the “theme” or “topic” of this span of discourse.

The article is not the only means available, however. In a number of languages the topic may be expressed through word order. The syntactic expression of discourse-pragmatic features is a familiar phenomenon in Arabic and elsewhere. Khan (1988), in discussing the principles underlying sentences of the types which he calls “SV” (i.e., subject-initial *ismiyya* constructions such as *zaydun jā’a* ‘Zayd: (he) came’) and “Extraposition” (i.e., *jumal δāt wajhayni* such as *zaydun jā’a ’abū-hu* ‘Zayd: his father came’) observes the following:

²⁷ In addition to syntactic considerations such as those to be discussed below, there are also morphological means of expressing definiteness other than through an article (e.g., case marking)—see the survey in Krámský (1976).

One of the most characteristic features of extraposed items and preverbal subjects is their 'assumed familiarity', i.e. the speaker/writer assumes that the hearer/reader is familiar with and is able to identify the referent of the nominal. A nominal is assumed to be familiar by virtue of either (a) being closely related to the immediately preceding discourse (context-bound) or (b) being in the permanent knowledge store of the hearer/reader.

... In conformity with the general principle that the initial nominal in Ex/SV clauses is context-bound, the topic referent which occurs at the front of a 'topic-shifting' Ex/SV clause is usually directly related to the prior discourse. If this is not the case, a 'given' item which is not the topic of the ensuing discourse is sometimes placed in initial position instead, while the new topic is introduced later in the clause. In such cases the extraposed item or preverbal subject acts as a 'bridge' from the prior discourse to the new topic span. [Khan 1988: 51-52]

Since "familiarity" or "givenness" is so closely linked with the sentence-initial topic position, it is not surprising to find that the initial noun phrase of such constructions is overwhelmingly associated with definiteness. Khan finds only one counterexample to this generalization in his corpus and draws attention to the scarcity of indefinite noun phrases in the topic position.²⁸

It should be pointed out that the occurrence of an indefinite nominative nominal at the front of a clause is not frequently attested. Most cases recorded are from Middle Arabic texts and so this phenomenon in the fables of Luqmān should also perhaps be considered a Middle Arabic feature... Whatever the case may be, constructions such as [the passage in question] are statistically very marginal outside the vernaculars... [Khan 1988: 54]²⁹

Thus, while it is not an absolute rule, there is an unmistakable tendency for the *mubtada'* of a *jumla ismiyya* to be definite, and hence (unless the *mubtada'* is a proper name or a pronominal³⁰) for it to be marked with the definite article. Tendencies of this sort have been observed throughout a

²⁸ The counterexample which Khan cites is '*insānun kāna lahu ṣanamun fī baytihi ya'būduhu* 'a man—there was to him (i.e., he had) an idol in his house which he used to worship,' in which the *mubtada'* ('*insānun*') is uncharacteristically indefinite. The text in question is drawn from Lyons' *Classical Arabic Reader*.

²⁹ Cf. similarly Moutaouakil (1989: 103).

³⁰ Khan observes, however, "... Another feature of these constructions... is that the initial item is generally a full nominal [rather than a pronominal—DT]. This occurs even when the referent of the nominal has topic status in the immediately preceding discourse and its explicit identification is redundant" (1988: 229).

number of languages, and the connection between topicality and definiteness has been described as a cross-linguistic universal.

... Clearly, this function of specifying the domain within which the predication holds is related to the structure of the discourse in which the sentence is found. The topic is the “center of attention”; it announces the theme of the discourse. This is why the topic must be definite... The functional role of the topic as setting the framework within which the predication holds precludes the possibility of an indefinite topic... [Li and Thompson 1976: 464]

The syntactic phenomena associated with these pragmatic issues—in particular the extraposition or fronting of topicalized material—are not restricted among the Semitic languages to Arabic. Khan’s (1988) cross-Semitic survey of these problems confirms that a substantially similar set of phenomena may be identified in his Biblical Hebrew, Biblical Aramaic, Syriac, Akkadian, and Amharic corpora.

... The use of Ex[traposition] or [resumptive pronominal agreement] to mark the onset of various discourse spans has been shown to cut across the whole Semitic area. Most Semitic languages also employ S-V sequences to perform this function. This applies even in languages in which it is normal to place the subject of a clause in initial position, e.g. Akkadian... and Amharic... [Khan 1988: 229]

šū-ū ¹ḥ a-za-qi-a-ū pul-ḥi me-lam-me be-lu-ti-ia is-ḥu-pu-šū-ma
(Sennacherib III.37-38) ‘the aforementioned Hezekiah, the terrifying
splendor of my majesty overcame him and...’

ḥēwātā rābī’āyātā malkū rābī’āyā tēḥēwe(’) ḥā’ar’ā dī tišne(’) min-kāl-
malkawātā (Daniel 7: 23) ‘the fourth beast: a fourth kingdom shall be
on the earth, which shall be different from all the kingdoms’³¹

In short, one of the most important notions correlated with definiteness—i.e., the realm of topicality—in addition to finding its reflection in the definite article, is manifested through the syntax. The article, we have noted, is held to be a comparatively late development restricted to a specific subset of the Semitic languages. The syntactic expression of topicality, in contrast, is well documented throughout Semitic, and with considerable confidence we may assume at least its general features to have been present in the ancestral language.

³¹ The passages are cited from Khan (1988: 108, 167). In the Aramaic example, the extraposed noun phrase refers to one of the series of beasts in Nebuchadnezzar’s dream, while the “comment” section is the soothsayer’s explication of the vision.

It is thus not difficult to imagine that, at an early stage, Semitic employed word order to express at least certain of the functions now performed by the article. Prior to the appearance of the article, it would presumably have sufficed simply to employ the ancestor of the Arabic *ismiyya*-construction in order to mark the topic-comment distinction, even in the absence of an overt means of marking definiteness.

*[man^{TOPIC}: [bit-him dog]^{COMMENT}]
 = ‘**in re* (the familiar/relevant) man: a dog bit him’
 (ult. > Arabic *al-rajulu ‘aḏḏa-hu kalbun*)

*[dog^{TOPIC}: [(it) bit man]^{COMMENT}]
 = ‘**in re* (the familiar/relevant) dog: it bit a man’
 (ult. > Arabic *al-kalbu ‘aḏḏa rajulan*)

There is no inherent reason that a marking of “status” of the sort discussed in Chapter Two could not have been superimposed upon a topic-comment structure of this sort. The result of such an augmentation would have been an “emphatic” counterpart to this sentence-type.

*[[man^{TOPIC}: [bit-him dog]^{COMMENT}]^{“EMPH”}]
 = ‘*I assert that [*in re* (the familiar/relevant) man: a dog bit him]’

*[[dog^{TOPIC}: [(it) bit man]^{COMMENT}]^{“EMPH”}]
 = ‘*I assert that [*in re* (the familiar/relevant) dog: it bit a man]’

The article, it is suggested, has resulted through a “bleaching” of the emphaticness of such a structure. The presence of a status-marker would have contributed little if anything to the semantic content of the utterance. In the absence of any real semantic difference between *[man^{TOPIC}: [bit-him dog]^{COMMENT}] and *[man^{TOPIC}: [bit-him dog]^{COMMENT}]^{“EMPH”}] it is therefore conceivable that a particle marking something as vague as “emphaticness” could have become reinterpreted and grammaticalized as an overt index of the discourse-pragmatic relations obtaining between the constituent elements of the sentence. Once this step had been taken, the language would have had at its disposal a new avenue enabling it to indicate the degree of familiarity of the entities in a given sentence. In terms of indicating the topic/comment structure, this new avenue, of course, was redundant as long as the language was also able to make use of the word order. As a free morpheme, however, such a “proto-article” would have enjoyed the advantage of also being capable of reflecting the “familiarity” of entities outside of the topic position. The language would thereby become capable of using a discrete morpheme in order to express notions for which it had previously relied upon the syntax.

*[[(man^{+FAMILIAR})^{TOPIC}: [bit-him dog^{+FAMILIAR/-FAMILIAR}]^{COMMENT}]
 = ‘*in re the (familiar) man: the (familiar) dog/
 (an unfamiliar) dog bit him]’

4.6.3 *The article and its noun phrase*

The key to the development of the article from the status-marker lies not so much in its original value as in its location. It was proposed in Chapter Two that, at an early stage of Arabic, the appearance of *la-* and its position within the sentence were governed by the interaction of a set of factors.

I. In the simple sentence-type (i.e., those composed of single simple “VSO” or “NP + Predicate” clauses) *la-* occurred in clause-initial position. To a noteworthy degree, we have seen that its appearance is associated with words ending in a consonant.

wa-la-qad 'arsalnā 'ilā 'umamin min qablika... (VI: 42) ‘And *la-qad* We have sent (messengers) to nations before you...’
wa-la-dāru l-āxirati xayrun (XVI: 30) ‘And *la-the* abode of the next life (is) best’

II. In more complex sentence-types, *la-* is typically found prefixed to the last major constituent of the sequence. If there is a complete clause embedded within the sentence, the *la-* will be placed at the beginning of that clause. If there is no embedded clause, the *la-* will appear before the final phrase of the sequence.

law kāna fī l-'arḍi malā'ikatun yamšūna muṭma'innīna la-nazzalnā 'alayhim min al-samā'i mal'akan rasūlan (XVII: 95) [If there were angels walking the earth in peace] *la-*[We would send down to them from heaven an angel as apostle]
'inna llaḍīna 'ūtū l-kitāba la-ya'lamūna 'annahu l-ḥaqqu min rabbihim (II: 144) ‘‘*inna* [those to whom the Book has been brought] *la-*[(they) know that it is the truth from their Lord]’
'inna rabbaka min ba'dihā la-ḡafūrun raḥīmun (XVI: 110) ‘‘*inna* your Lord after these things *la-(is)* forgiving, compassionate’

It is interesting to note that these statements mirror rather closely the principles governing the placement of the article within its noun phrase. For noun phrases consisting simply of a noun, the article is prefixed to that noun, while, for noun phrases composed of more than one noun (e.g., composed of a construct chain), the article is attached to the rightmost word.

| | | | | | | | |
|-------------|----------|---------------|----------|------------|---------------|----------|----------------------|
| | | | | <i>al-</i> | <i>malik-</i> | <i>u</i> | 'the king' |
| | | | | the- | king- | nom. | |
| | | ' <i>abd-</i> | <i>u</i> | <i>l-</i> | <i>malik-</i> | <i>i</i> | 'the servant |
| | | servant- | nom. | the- | king- | gen. | of the king' |
| <i>ism-</i> | <i>u</i> | ' <i>abd-</i> | <i>i</i> | <i>l-</i> | <i>malik-</i> | <i>i</i> | 'the name of the |
| name- | nom. | servant- | gen. | the- | king- | gen. | servant of the king' |

In a sense we may say that this represents the same set of placement rules operating at two different syntactic levels: the rules for *la-* involve the sentence and take syntactic constituents (clauses or phrases) as their minimal units, while the rules for *(a)l-/(a)C-* involve the phrase and are based upon the word.

It will be recalled that, in the absence of the element '*inna-*', we seem to find very real limitations upon the use of the particle *la-* in conjunction with nominal (*ismiyya*) sentences. There appears, in fact, to be a general prohibition against the prefixing of *la-* to a sentence composed of an extraposed noun phrase and a full clause, such that the constructions **la-zaydun qaraba 'amran* '**la-Zayd, (he) beat 'Amr*' and **la-zaydun qaraba-hu 'amrun* '**la-Zayd, beat-him 'Amr*' are not attested. While we do find *la-* in *ismiyya* sentences such as *wa-la-'amatun mu'minatun xayrun min mušrikin...* (II: 221) '*And la-a believing handmaiden (is) better than a polytheist...*'; these presumably represent simple "NP + Predicate" clauses rather than instances of extraposition (NP + S).³²

In other words, the *la-* does not appear to be allowed in association with the well-known topic-extraposition construction which, we have conjectured, provided the original starting point for the development of the marking of definiteness. The complementarity of distribution observed here finds an explanation if we posit that at an earlier point in history the **l*, the ancestor of *la-*, was in fact allowed in such constructions, but that, in conjunction with the discourse features of such syntactic structures, it came to be grammaticalized, in its ultimate shape *(a)l-/(a)C-*, as a marker of definiteness.

**l*-[man^{TOPIC}: [bit-him dog]^{COMMENT}]
 '*Concerning (the familiar/relevant) man: a dog bit him'
 (ult. < '**I assert that...*')
 > *al-rajulu 'aḏḏa-hu kalbun* 'The man, a dog bit him.'

³² In the example quoted note the presence of the indefinite subject '*amatun mu'minatun*'. As we have seen, indefiniteness is very unusual for a noun phrase serving as topic.

4.6.4 *The article and the verbal sentence*

It was suggested above in Chapter Two that the curious restrictions upon the verbal forms which permit the appearance of *la-* may be related to a question of phonology. Specifically, it was claimed that, in simple clause-types—i.e., the verbal (*fi'liyya*) and “NP + Predicate” types—the sentence is permitted to take *la-* when its first word originally ended in a consonant (e.g., when the verb was in the energetic form or marked with the particle *qad*, or the noun phrase was indefinite), and it generally did not allow *la-* when that word ended in a vowel (e.g., when the verb was in the simple past or non-past form). To be sure, as a synchronic statement this is a remarkably unobvious and arbitrary distribution. In historical terms, however, it is not incomprehensible if we envision a point in pre-Arabic at which the ancestor of the *la*-particle was placed by rule in the position between the first and second words of a verbal sentence. This point in the sentence, known as Wackernagel’s position,³³ is well documented as a locus for the insertion of clitic particles in a large number of languages. As far as other Semitic languages are concerned, Wackernagel’s position attracts particles in both Gə‘əz (cf. Lambdin 1978: 233 on *-sä* ‘but, however, on the other hand’) and Syriac (cf. *dên* ‘but’ and *ger* ‘because’).³⁴

Since there are no Arabic words which begin with a vowel,³⁵ we may assume that the second word of a sentence of the type under discussion would have begun with a consonant. With insertion of the **l-* between X¹ and X², we may reconstruct sequences such as the following:

| | X ¹ | ↓ | X ² | |
|----------------------------------|-------------------|----------|----------------|--------------------------------------|
| X ¹ = Vowel-final | <i>*yaf'al-u</i> | <i>l</i> | <i>'abd-u-</i> | <i>'*Does-*/l-the servant...'</i> |
| X ¹ = Consonant-final | <i>*yaf'al-an</i> | <i>l</i> | <i>'abd-u</i> | <i>'*Will-do-*/l-the servant...'</i> |

It appears that the ancestor of Arabic, confronted by a complex concatenation of consonants consisting of the final consonant of X¹, the status-particle **l*, and the initial consonant of X², chose to relieve itself of

³³ Named for Jacob Wackernagel (1853-1938). See “Über ein Gesetz der indogermanischen Wortstellung,” *Indogermanische Forschungen* 1 (1892): 333-436.

³⁴ See also Testen (1997) on the Northwest Semitic request-marking particle (Hebrew *-nā*, Syriac *-nī*), the placement of which seems to have been governed by a Wackernagel-style rule. It is possible that the Gə‘əz and Syriac particles have been influenced by Greek, which routinely makes use of Wackernagel’s position for such sentence connectors.

³⁵ I suspect that vowel-initial words were not absolutely proscribed in Proto-Semitic, but to the extent that such vowel-initial forms may in fact have existed in Proto-Semitic they would have occupied a very marginal position within the overall system of the language—see Testen (To appear a).

this awkward sequence by displacing the **l* from Wackernagel's position and installing it at the very beginning of the sentence—hence, ultimately, **la-yaf'alan*. The same displacement, motivated by the same concerns, evidently took place in simple sentences composed of a noun phrase and a predicate, when the first word of that noun phrase ended in a consonant—hence such constructions as II: 221, *la-'amatun mu'minatun xayrun...* 'la-a believing handmaiden (is) better...'

In the absence of a consonant at the end of *X*¹, and thus in the absence of the cluster prompting the displacement, the **l* remained in its place. Here, we shall suggest, it fell prey to discourse-pragmatic forces like those at work in the extraposition construction. As Khan observes, even in the absence of a fronted noun phrase there are distinctions between given and new information to be found in an Arabic sentence.

In clauses which begin with a verb (i.e. generally when the verb is perfective in aspect or when the clause continues a span) the same principle of context-boundedness determines the position of the subject vis-à-vis the object. In clauses with the order VSO the subject is given and the object is usually new. However, if the object is given and the subject is new then the object generally precedes the subject.

θumma nahašat 'Amiran

ħayyatun

'Then a snake bit (the
aforementioned) 'Amir.'

[Khan 1988: 53]

In other words, within a verb-initial sentence the more familiar argument will tend to appear in the position immediately following the verb, while markedly "new" information will tend to be reserved for the final position in the sentence. Assuming that a comparable state of discourse-pragmatic affairs obtained at the earlier historical stage, the status-particle **l*, when located in Wackernagel's position, would thus have been located directly in front of the noun phrase (whether subject or not) of greatest familiarity (or of least "newness"). As in the case of the extraposition construction, the independent principles governing the disposition of **l* placed it directly adjacent to the elements of the sentence which, in discourse-pragmatic terms, would serve as fertile soil for the development of a formal marking of definiteness (ult. *yaf'alu l-'abdu...*).

4.6.5 *The definite noun phrase*

It is suggested, therefore, that the seeds of the Arabic definite article lay in the particle which we have identified elsewhere as serving to mark the assertive status, and which we reconstruct formally as **l*. In Arabic we see the results of a bifurcation, both formal and functional, by which the original particle has given rise to two separate offshoots, an

asseverative/precative marker *la-/li-* and a definite article *(a)l-/(a)C-*. The mechanisms underlying this twofold evolution are to be found in the discourse-pragmatic factors inherent in the various syntactic structures, as well as in the formal consequences of the development of a pre-consonantal **l* in environments with or without a preceding vowel.³⁶

If our conjectures about the placement of the original **l-* within its sentence are correct, a “proto-article” **l-* first arose in two syntactic environments: in Wackernagel’s position within the basic verb-initial construction and in extraposed topic noun-phrases.

| | | | |
|---------------------------|-------------------|--|--------------------------|
| | | | [Bit <i>*l-</i> dog man] |
| | [<i>*l-</i> Man: | | [bit-him dog]] |
| [Dog (of) <i>*l-</i> man: | | | [bit-him (it)]] |

The rules of **l*-placement within the extraposed noun phrase, which echo the rules identified in Chapter Two governing the placement of *la-* within the complex sentence, appear to have inserted the **l* before the rightmost element in the noun phrase. In the hypothetical example given above, **“dog (of) *l-man”*, the rightmost element in question consists of the final genitive of a construct chain. Since an attributive adjective would normally have fallen to the right of its head noun, however, the presence of such an adjective at the end of the noun phrase, we may presume, would have led to the shifting of the **l* further to the right.³⁷

| | | | | |
|------------------------------|------------------|------------|------------------|----------------------------------|
| | <i>*Man</i> | <i>*l-</i> | big | <i>*“the big man”</i> |
| <i>*Dog_i (of)</i> | man _j | <i>*l</i> | big _j | <i>*“the dog of the big man”</i> |
| <i>*Dog_i (of)</i> | man _j | <i>*l</i> | big _i | <i>*“the man’s big dog”</i> |

Once the definite article had become associated with adjectives, it seems to have become treated like the original adjectival categories, entering into the general agreement-marking pattern by which adjectives and their head nouns are jointly marked for the features of the head (i.e., case, number, and

³⁶ It appears from the discussion above that the definite article developed largely in sentence-medial (i.e., post-vocalic) environments, whereas what has survived as the asseverative *la-* was largely a product of the sentence-initial position. The *lautgesetzlich* consequences of developing in these differing environments have been augmented by analogical processes which led to, e.g., the appearance of *la-* as the manifestation of the asseverative also in the restricted number of situations in which it occurs medially (e.g., with *‘in al-muxaffafa*) rather than as the **l-* which one might have expected. No doubt the development of the article has entailed comparable phenomena.

³⁷ The two genitival constructions here would have been distinguished, of course, by means of adjectival agreement in case, gender, and number—cf. the case marking of Arabic *kalb-u l-rajul-i l-kabīr-i* ‘the dog of the big (*l-kabīr-i*, gen.) man’ vs. *kalb-u l-rajul-i l-kabīr-u* ‘the big (*l-kabīr-u*, nom.) dog of the man.’

gender). As a result, the category of definiteness came to be doubly marked in the environment of adjectives, just as case, number, and gender are doubly marked—*al-kalb-u l-kabīr-u* ‘the-dog (m. sg.)-nom. the-big (m. sg.)-nom.’

It is possible that we find traces of the earlier stage of the agreement system frozen in certain isolated noun phrases in which the adjective is marked with the article while its noun is not—cf. such month-names as *Rabī’ al-’awwal* and *Jumādā al-’ūlā*. Parallels to this construction, while similarly isolated, are more frequent in Biblical Hebrew, indicating the possibility of this structure being quite old (Rendsburg 1990: 107-109; Waltke and O’Connor 1990: 260).

hāṣer hag-gəḏōlā (I Kings 7: 12) ‘the Great Courtyard’

mābō’ haš-šālīšī (Jer. 38: 14) ‘the Third Entrance’

šēḥa’ kabāšot hā-’ēlle^h (Gen. 21: 29) ‘these seven lambs’

One set of adjective-like elements has escaped the expansion of the agreement pattern, however. The demonstratives of Literary Arabic (*hāḏā* ‘this (m. sg.),’ *ḏālika* ‘that (m. sg.),’ etc.) differ from attributive adjectives in that, while they share the marking of gender, number, and case with the noun which they modify, they do not take the definite article. It is quite possible that this absence of a marking for definiteness is related to the fact that the normal position of the Arabic demonstrative, unlike that of the adjective, is to the left of its head rather than to the right, and hence it normally stands at the opposite extreme of the noun phrase from the original position of **l*—i.e., **“this dog big *l-black”* > Arabic “this the-dog the-big the-black” (*hāḏā l-kalb-u l-kabīru l-’aswad-u*).

As a result of these developments, we may hypothesize, the wandering particle **l* gave rise to the complex of definiteness-marking phenomena which we find at work in the modern Arabic noun phrase. The final step to the attested system is the extraction of the newly derived article from the extraposed noun phrase and its introduction as a means of marking definiteness throughout the sentence. As we have seen, it is quite possible that the language already had a starting point for this expansion in the tendency to place “given” noun phrases in the second position of the sentence.

4.7.1 *Second-millennium precursors of the definite article?*

If the conjectures expressed above are valid and we follow Barth (with the reservations discussed above) in deriving the Arabic article from the same source as the asseverative-*cum*-precative particle, we may ultimately reconstruct the ancestor of the article just as we reconstructed the ancestor of *la*—i.e., as a vowelless **l*. From this perspective we may address the main

comparative Semitic aspect of the problem of the article: are there cognates to Arabic (a)l-/(a)C- elsewhere in Semitic, and, if so, what form have they assumed?

Up to this point, our discussion of the history of the article has taken the form of an internal reconstruction based upon Arabic data. We are not entitled, of course, to automatically assume that the source of the article in Arabic is necessarily to be equated with the source of the articles which we find documented elsewhere in Semitic. Nonetheless, since an internal reconstruction will not reveal much about the time depth of the phenomena under consideration, it is possible in principle that the set of factors which, we have suggested, gave rise to the appearance of a definite article in Arabic might be located not merely at a “pre-Arabic” point in history but actually at the early West Semitic phase, and that the creation of the article took place, not specifically in the Arabic branch of the Semitic family, but rather at a deeper stage within the development of the Semitic languages. The discourse-pragmatic features of the Arabic sentence which underlie our model for the development of definiteness as a formal category of the language are mirrored throughout many of the Semitic languages (as well, indeed, as many non-Semitic languages), and the **l*-particle, which we take to have provided the formal material for the new article, is also documented throughout the Semitic languages. Both of the pertinent components thus seem to have been on hand from the earliest reconstructable stage of Semitic.

The question of the prehistory of the article thus resolves into one of historical phonology: is it plausible to maintain that one or more of the other elements which function as a definite article across the Semitic languages can be formally derived from the **l* which we have identified as the source of Arabic (a)l-/(a)C-?

Before turning to the non-Arabic languages in which we find fully developed articles, let us consider briefly two of the sources of information on the early linguistic development of Northwest Semitic. While it has never been suggested that Ugaritic had a definite article, we have seen that in Ugaritic the particle *l*- could serve “zur Affirmation des nominalen Ausdrucks, des Nomens (des Substantivs; vereinzelt des Adjektivs)” (Aartun 1974: 33).

wl ‘*šm tspr* (1010: 17-18) ‘und (-*l*) die Holzstämme sollst du zählen’
lb’l npl larš (67:VI:8-9) ‘(-*l*-) Ba’l ist zur Erde gefallen’

In the absence of a more complete understanding of the role of the *l* in such constructions, it is only possible to speculate that we find here an early forerunner of the *l* of definiteness—perhaps the *l* in such passages represents

some form of topic marking such as we hypothesized was a midway point on the road to the full definite article.

In certain senses, however, the older Amorite data seem to point to the possibility of the existence of an article not far removed from the modern Arabic article, although it has not been recognized as such. The Amorite data are exclusively onomastic, and our understanding of the language lying behind the names suffers accordingly. Nonetheless, we may say with some confidence that there are a good number of Amorite names in which the only possible analysis is to see a compounding of an element *la-* with a noun or adjective.

... Before an adjective, the most likely nuance of *la-* is asseverative: e.g., *la-ṭā-ab-tum* /*la-ṭābtum*/ (feminine) “good indeed” (4336). Before a simple noun, the emphatic nuance is difficult, however; it is unlikely, for example, that the name *la-a-mu-ri-im* /*la-’amurrim*/ (genitive; 4204) means “indeed, an Amorite.” More likely, *la-* in these instances serves as a vocative particle: “o (god) Amurru.” The noun in such cases, then, will normally be a divine name or epithet; another example: *la-la-bu-[um]* /*la-labûm*/ “o Lion” (4283). However, it is also possible that it is the preposition in some of these instances (“for Amurru,” “for the Lion”) [Huehnergard 1983: 581]

While in principle the asseverative, vocative, and prepositional readings of the *la-* in such names are all conceivable, it is nonetheless worth noting that these structures as they stand are remarkably similar to Arabic “article + substantive” noun phrases: we need only hypothesize (as we did in Chapter Three in the case of the precative particle) that an early Semitic **l* is reflected as *la-* in Amorite in order to find eminently plausible readings for many such names (*la-ṭābtum* “the-good (f.) one” < **l-ṭābtum*, *la-’amurriyum* “*the-Amorite” < **l-’amurriyum*, etc.). Cf. likewise such forms as the following (from Gelb 1980: 140-143):

| | | |
|----------------------------------|----------------|--|
| <i>la-ḥa-am-mu</i> | (Harris 18 14) | < <i>*l-’ammum</i> ‘the-paternal uncle’? |
| <i>la-ka-zu-bu-um</i> | (Mari) | < <i>*l-kaḏûb-um</i> ‘the-mendacious’? |
| <i>la-na-su-u₂-um</i> | (Mari) | < <i>*l-našû’um</i> ‘the-elevated’? |

Perhaps Amorite *la-* is also to be read as an article-like element in other constructions. Names such as the following, for example, while open to other interpretations, are quite reminiscent of the definite construct chains of the later Semitic languages.³⁸

³⁸ Cf. similarly the name *a-ya-la-su-su-mu-û*, concerning which Huffmon notes “... if [this name] is correctly interpreted as involving **’ayya* “where?”, the *la-* cannot be the preposition” (Huffmon 1965: 223).

| | | |
|--------------------------|------------------------|---|
| <i>sa-mu-la-DINGIR</i> | (B 39 +) ³⁹ | < ‘(the) name (of) <i>l</i> -god’ ? |
| <i>zi-id-ku-la-na-si</i> | (Mari) | < ‘(the) justice (of) <i>l</i> -Našī’ ⁴⁰ ? |

It cannot be denied, of course, that other readings of such names are equally possible. Nonetheless, it seems that a model based upon the Arabic definite article will go quite far in explicating certain problematical aspects of Amorite onomastics. If this approach is correct, we find that we have a measure of evidence suggesting that an article-like element which could well go back to an earlier **l* was already in place in at least one language of the Northwest Semitic area by the first half of the second millennium B.C.

4.7.2.1 *The Canaanite article*

We have seen that the article *haC-* of Hebrew, as well as the articles of Phoenician/Punic and Moabite (which are spelled <h> and are presumably to be read on the model of Hebrew), are quite similar to the Arabic article in the details of their syntactic behavior, to such a degree that, were it not for the formal disjunction between *haC-* and *(a)l-/ (a)C-*, we would be eager to relate them historically.

Indeed, as we have seen, there has been no dearth of attempts to achieve such a reconciliation of the Canaanite and Arabic articles. Primarily these attempts have been driven by the conviction that the Arabic *l-* could in some manner be derived from a geminate consonant through dissimilation. In the absence of independent phonological grounds to support such a hypothetical development, we may return now to this question from the opposite perspective: is there any possibility that the Canaanite *haC-* may be derived from the **l-* which we have taken to lie behind the Arabic article?

4.7.2.2 *Toward a Northwest Semitic reflex of **l**

It will be recalled that the evidence contributed by the Canaanite and Aramaic languages toward the question of the asseverative/precative **l-* particle is curiously limited. In terms of the Aramaic group, the evidence is restricted to the indication of a precative **l-* frozen in certain third-person verbal forms (**l-ip‘al-* vs. indicative **yip‘al-*). Among the Canaanite languages, the most that we find is a handful of Biblical Hebrew passages

³⁹ Also attested as *su-mu-la-DINGIR* (B 39 +), *su-mu-la-i₃-li₂* (UCP X/I 34 2), and *su-mu-la-el* (Sumer XXIII 160 5).

⁴⁰ Read by Huffmon (1965: 97) as “Justice Belongs to (the) Našī’.”

in which we encounter anomalous uses of a prefixed *lamed*, which may or may not be of relevance to the question of the **l*-particle. While many of the alleged instances of *lamed emphaticum* in Hebrew are intriguing, the facts that (a) most of the relevant passages are limited to the later books of the Bible, (b) certain of the passages adduced in support of the emphatic *lā*-display little or no “emphaticness” visible in their context, and (c) many of the passages are open to interpretations which do not necessitate the positing of an emphatic *lā*- render us reluctant to admit these curious formations as pertinent to the present question. In short, we cannot regard these passages as decisive in resolving the question of the Hebrew reflex of the particle **l*-.

Let us hypothesize that the definite article is to be reconstructed as **l*- for “pre-Canaanite” as well as for Arabic, and that, in some manner, the attested form *haC*- constitutes the regular phonological outcome of **l*-. It has been suggested above (§3.4.2) that it is possible to reconstruct the prototype of the negating particle reflected by the correspondence [Akkadian *ul* = Hebrew *'al* = Old Aramaic *'l* = Ugaritic *al* = Gə‘əz *'al*-, etc.] as **'l*. In this case we see that the Hebrew reflex of a syllabic **l* is characterized by the presence of a vowel *a*. It would thus not be surprising if the syllabic **l* in the hypothesized definite article assumed a similar vocalism.

4.7.2.3 Hebrew *h*- vs. Arabic *'*-

The presence of the initial *h*- in the Canaanite article does not in itself refute a derivation of the article from **l*-. At various places in Hebrew morphology we find an initial *h*- corresponding to the *hamzat al-waṣl* of Arabic (see 1-4 below), suggesting that *h*- served at an early stage as the bearer of an epenthetic syllable. In addition, in a small number of instances (5-7 below), we find that a Hebrew *h*- corresponds to the Arabic *hamzat al-qaf*‘, the phonemic glottal stop.

| | Hebrew | Arabic |
|---------------------------|----------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1. N-stem verb (imper.) | <i>hiqqāṭel</i> | (<i>'i</i>) <i>nqatil</i> - |
| 2. Gt-stem verb | [<i>hitpāqed</i>] | (<i>'i</i>) <i>qtatil</i> - |
| 3. Dt-stem verb | <i>hiṭqāṭel</i> | <i>taqattal</i> - |
| 4. Št-stem verb | [<i>hištaḥāwe^h</i>] | (<i>'i</i>) <i>staqtal</i> - |
| 5. Causative-stem verb | <i>haqtel</i> | <i>'aqtil</i> - |
| 6. Interrogative particle | <i>hā-</i> | <i>'a</i> - |
| 7. Presentation particle | <i>hinne^h</i> | <i>'inna</i> |

Table 26: Hebrew initial *h*- corresponding to Arabic *'*-

This *h-* vs. *'-* distinction cuts across the West Semitic languages. We find that, while the *h-* is found throughout the Canaanite languages in these forms, the Aramaic languages are divided into *h-*-prefixing languages (Old Aramaic, Imperial Aramaic, Biblical Aramaic) and *'-*-prefixing languages (Syriac, Palestinian Jewish Aramaic). Arabic employs *'-*, but the early North Arabian languages seem to show *h-*. The Ethiopic languages systematically show *'-* for such forms, while the Modern South Arabian languages seem to have originally had *h-*.

Rather than reconstructing a completely separate proto-element to account for the various *h-* = *'-* correspondences, it is simpler to posit that these examples reflect the Hebrew and Arabic reflexes of an original consonant cluster (1-4 above) and an initial vowel (5-7), respectively. The two sets may be collapsed into one by positing that initial clusters received a prefixed vowel under certain circumstances, and that this vowel subsequently received a prefixed laryngeal (either *h-* or *'-*) in the various descendant languages.⁴¹

It will be noticed that the initial consonant of the definite article fits closely, *mutatis mutandis*, into this pattern.

Table 27: The onset of the Causative-stem verb and the definite article

| | Causative-Stem Verb | Definite Article |
|------------|-----------------------------|------------------|
| Hebrew | <i>hip'íl</i> | <i>haC-</i> |
| Arabic | <i>'af'al-</i> | <i>('a)l-</i> |
| Phoenician | <i>[yp'l]</i> ⁴² | <i>h-</i> |
| Moabite | <i>hp'l</i> | <i>h-</i> |
| Liḥyanite | <i>hf'l</i> | <i>h(n)-</i> |

This suggests the possibility of the *h-* of the Canaanite article being, like the *hamzat al-waṣl* of the Arabic article, a secondary development prompted by the presence of a vowel **a-* in word-initial position.⁴³ This view of the Canaanite article gains support from the instability of the initial *h-*, which is not found in the presence of a closely joined preposition (§4.4)—i.e., Hebrew *ham-mélek* 'the king' < **am-malk-*, but *l-am-mélek* 'to the king' < **lV- + -am- + -malk-*. This distribution may be described by positing that the *h-* was prefixed to an initial vowel, but, in close juncture,

⁴¹ This argument will be found discussed at greater depth in Testen (To appear a).

⁴² The *y-* of the Phoenician causative stem (later Punic *'y-*) is regarded as a secondary development from an earlier **hi-* (Segert 1976: 142).

⁴³ The secondary nature of these consonants, it will be recalled, was alluded to above by Ullendorff: "the 'consonantal' element merely served as a graphic device or vowel carrier à la *hamzat al-waṣl*" (Ullendorff 1977: 170).

where the preceding element acted as a buffer, the addition of *h-* was rendered unnecessary.

4.7.2.4 Semitic **l* and Northwest Semitic gemination

It appears, therefore, that the presence of neither the *h-* nor the vowel *-a-* is inherently inconsistent with a derivation of the Hebrew article from an early Semitic **l-*. It remains to be determined whether there is reason to suspect that the gemination characteristic of the Hebrew article may also be derived from such a source.

I would like to suggest that there is at least one other point in Hebrew morphology in which we have reason to reconstruct an original **l*. It has been suggested above (§3.4.2) that we reconstruct the original shape of the prefixed form of the basic-stem verb as a construction composed of a person-marking consonantal element (**'-*, **t-*, **n-*, **y-*) added directly to the verbal stem (*-C₁C₂VC₃₋*), without the mediation of the so-called “preradical vowel.” This approach has been employed elsewhere (Testen: 1994) in order to explain the historical development of the irregular I-*w* class of verbs: it appears that a concatenation of the person-prefix and the cluster at the beginning of the stem **-CCVC-* led to the radical consonant **w* taking on syllabicity, flanked as it would have been by the person-prefix and the second radical of the stem.

| | | | | | |
|------------|--|--|------------|---------------|--|
| <i>*'-</i> | | | <i>*'-</i> | <i>-uθVb-</i> | |
| <i>*t-</i> | | | <i>*t</i> | <i>-uθVb-</i> | |
| <i>*n-</i> | | | <i>*n</i> | <i>-uθVb-</i> | |
| <i>*y-</i> | | | <i>*y</i> | <i>-uθVb-</i> | |

→

| | | | | | |
|------------|-----------------|--|------------|---------------|--|
| <i>*'-</i> | <i>+ -wθVb-</i> | | <i>*'-</i> | <i>-uθVb-</i> | |
| <i>*t-</i> | | | <i>*t</i> | <i>-uθVb-</i> | |
| <i>*n-</i> | | | <i>*n</i> | <i>-uθVb-</i> | |
| <i>*y-</i> | | | <i>*y</i> | <i>-uθVb-</i> | |

> Akkadian *ušib*, *tušib*...
[ult. > Arabic *yaθib-*,
Hebrew *yešeḇ*, etc.]

If the radical **w* was capable of acquiring syllabicity in this position, could other sonorant radicals not also have become syllabic in this same environment? Since we have conjectured in Chapter Three above that Semitic **l* had this property, we should at least allow for the possibility that in early Semitic there existed I-*l* verbs which, like the ancestor of the I-*w* type, were characterized by the presence of a syllabic **l* in their initial syllable.

| | | | | | |
|------------|--|--|------------|---------------|--|
| <i>*'-</i> | | | <i>*'-</i> | <i>-lCVC-</i> | |
| <i>*t-</i> | | | <i>*t-</i> | <i>-lCVC-</i> | |
| <i>*n-</i> | | | <i>*n-</i> | <i>-lCVC-</i> | |
| <i>*y-</i> | | | <i>*y-</i> | <i>-lCVC-</i> | |

→

| | | | | | |
|------------|------------------|--|------------|---------------|--|
| <i>*'-</i> | <i>+ *-lCVC-</i> | | <i>*'-</i> | <i>-lCVC-</i> | |
| <i>*t-</i> | | | <i>*t-</i> | <i>-lCVC-</i> | |
| <i>*n-</i> | | | <i>*n-</i> | <i>-lCVC-</i> | |
| <i>*y-</i> | | | <i>*y-</i> | <i>-lCVC-</i> | |

> ?

It is consequently of considerable significance that we find that the very common Northwest Semitic verb $*\sqrt{lq\dot{h}}$ 'take' routinely shows a highly irregular paradigm, in that prefixed forms of the verb show (a) disappearance of the radical *l*- and (b) gemination of the second radical *q*.⁴⁴

| | |
|-----------|---|
| Hebrew: | <i>'εqqah</i> (Gen. 14: 23), <i>tiqqah</i> (Gen. 38: 23) <i>et passim</i> |
| Punic: | <i>yqh</i> (CIS i 165: 24) (Carthaginian) |
| Moabite: | <i>'qh</i> (Mš' 17, 20) |
| Old Aram. | <i>yqh</i> (Sef. i B 27), ⁴⁵ <i>tqh</i> (Sef. iii 2), <i>yqh</i> (Had. 10), <i>yqh^w</i> (Had. 12) |
| Ugaritic: | <i>iqh</i> (Krt 204), etc. |

Superficially these prefixed forms resemble verbs of the I-*n* type, the morphology of which results from the assimilation of the radical *n* to the following consonant (e.g., Hebrew *yitten* 'he gives' < $*yV-ntin-$). While this assimilation is entirely normal in these languages for $*n$, however, it is not normal for $*l$. As long as we base our historical interpretation of the paradigm of $*\sqrt{lq\dot{h}}$ upon a starting point $*yV-lqah-$ we will be at a loss to explain why the $*l$ should have assimilated here and nowhere else in the language. If, however, we adopt the reconstruction given above for the I-*w* verbs and apply it to the I-*l* type, we may uniquely characterize the particular environment in which the assimilation is found by stating that, while a normal consonantal $*l$ does not assimilate, a Semitic syllabic $*l$ appears to be reflected, in these Northwest Semitic languages, by a vowel followed by gemination.⁴⁶

| | | | | | |
|----------|----------------|---------------|----------|---------------|------------------------------|
| $*'_{-}$ | | | $*'_{-}$ | <i>-lqah-</i> | |
| $*t_{-}$ | | | $*t_{-}$ | <i>-lqah-</i> | |
| $*n_{-}$ | | | $*n_{-}$ | <i>-lqah-</i> | |
| $*y_{-}$ | | | $*y_{-}$ | <i>-lqah-</i> | |
| | $+ *_{-}lqah-$ | \rightarrow | | | $> \text{Northwest Semitic}$ |
| | | | | | $*('t/n/y)-Vqqah-$ |

The verb $*\sqrt{lq\dot{h}}$ consequently provides us with independent grounds for suspecting that a Semitic $*l$ resulted in a "vowel + gemination" sequence in

⁴⁴ The scripts of the languages other than Hebrew do not allow us to say for certain, but these forms have traditionally been read *-qqah-* on the model of Hebrew.

⁴⁵ Sefire I also has the regular form of the verb (*ylqh*) in line B 35. In later Aramaic (by Imperial Aramaic) the paradigm has been systematically regularized and the *l* restored.

⁴⁶ Presumably there was originally nothing particularly "irregular" about the verb $*\sqrt{lq\dot{h}}$ *per se*, since the phonological environment in question would have been typical of any I-*l* verb. The apparent peculiarity of $*\sqrt{lq\dot{h}}$ arises solely from the fact that, as a particularly common verb, it has preserved the *lautgesetzlich* geminated form which has been analogically replaced in the case of other verbs by the morphologically normal $*_{-}lCVC-$ (e.g., Hebrew *yilbaš* 'he dresses').

the ancestor of Ugaritic, Canaanite, and Aramaic—*C-*lqaḥ*- > *CV*qqaḥ*-.⁴⁷ The way is therefore open to return to the question of the relation between the definite article of Northwest Semitic and the *-l- underlying the Arabic article. There seems to be nothing standing in the way of positing that, by regular phonological developments, an early Semitic *l took the shape *-aC- in these languages. It is thus plausible to derive Hebrew *ha*C- (as well as Phoenician *h*- and Moabite *h*-) from an original element *-l- which has been prefixed to substantives, and therefore syllabified in the environment between a word boundary and a following consonant—*l- + *kalb- → *l-kalb- > *ak-kalb- > *hak-kalb- > Hebrew *hak-kēlēb* = Arabic ('a)l-kalb-u 'the-dog'.⁴⁸

4.7.2.5 On the article in early Phoenician

As we saw above (§4.3.2), Lambdin (1971b: 326-330) has suggested that in many cases the early Phoenician article seems not to have been expressed in the consonantal script. He argues that, in the earliest inscriptions, the graphic <h> is regularly absent after prepositions, and that it is systematically absent in many inscriptions from construct chains and after the conjunction *w*- and the object marker 'yt. In the absence of any reason to believe that the article should have been excluded from these positions in Phoenician, Lambdin concludes that, in close juncture, the consonantal *h*- of the article was syncopated in such constructions, as it was in Biblical Hebrew after the prepositions *bə*-, *lə*-, and *kə*-. He therefore assumes, for passages such as the following (from the Byblian Yḥwmlk inscription), syntactic structures much like those of Hebrew, albeit with an implicit article not expressed through the script.

| | |
|---|---|
| <wh'prt z'> (l. 6) 'and this colonnade (?)' = wV-ha'-PRT az-zā | Cf. Heb. <i>wə-ham-malkā haz-zo(')t</i> 'and this queen' |
| <'lt mzbh zn> (ll. 11-12) 'on this altar' = 'alVt am-mVzbVh az-zVn' | Cf. Heb. 'al- <i>hammizbe^{ah} haz-ze^h</i> |
| <l'n 'm 'rṣ z> (l. 10) 'before the eyes of this citizenry' = lV'ēnē 'amm a'-arṣ az-zV | Cf. Heb. <i>lə'ēnē 'am hā-'āreṣ haz-ze^h</i> |

⁴⁷ The fact that the vowel in the verb in question seems to show up as *-i- (Ugaritic *iqḥ*, Hebrew 'eqqaḥ) need not disconcert us, since, as a verb, */lqḥ has presumably been reshaped under the influence of Barth's law (by Barth's law an early Semitic verb with a stem-vowel *-a- such as *-qqaḥ- was associated with a preradical vowel *-i-).

⁴⁸ Further material in support of the theory deriving Hebrew (*h*)aC- < Semitic *l will be found in Chapter Five.

Lambdin ascribes the absence of the *h*- to a secondary *h*-deleting development.⁴⁹ We have seen above, however, that it is equally possible to take the introduction of the *h*- to be secondary, and thus to consider the *h*-less article of Phoenician (as interpreted by Lambdin) the continuation of a stage prior to the introduction of the *h*-. It seems that, from the Phoenician point of view, words closely linked within a noun phrase did not actually count as containing the boundary which led to the introduction of the prothetic *h*-, whereas such a boundary was present between each individual element of the Hebrew noun phrase (aside from the proclitic prepositions).⁵⁰

| Phoenician | Hebrew |
|---|---|
| *[# <i>am-malk az-zV</i>] ^{NP} | *[# <i>am-malk #az-zī</i>] ^{NP} |
| > (<i>ham-malk az-zV</i>) = <i>hmlk z</i> | > <i>ham-mēlek haz-zē</i> |
| ‘this king’ (lit. ‘the-king the-this’) | |

4.7.3 On the article of Aramaic

It might be conjectured that a similar phenomenon is responsible for the shape assumed by the article in the Aramaic languages, a postposed *-ā*. While it has long been speculated that there is a connection of some sort between this *-ā* and the *haC*- of Canaanite, the details of this connection have remained ill defined. It might be asked whether taking as a starting point the **aC*- < **l*- which underlies the Canaanite articles affords us any insight into the Aramaic article.

It will be recalled that the Aramaic data on the precativ marker showed a curious lopsidedness, in that Aramaic seems to have preserved the particle **l*- only in connection with the person-prefix **y*- (§3.3.3). This phenomenon, it was conjectured, was explained as due to the fact that the original **l*- of the precativ together with the third-person prefix **y*- assumed the shape **l-i*- (< vowelless **l*- + vowelless **y*-), with syllabification of the **-y*- rather than the **l*-. When followed by a consonantal person-prefix (**’-*, **t-*, **n-*), on the other hand, the precativ

⁴⁹ “That is, the *h*- form of the article developed as in Hebrew, presumably when an *h*-syncope rule existed and the *h*-causative had not yet yielded to the *y*-causative, which spread from the negative **’iḥaqtil* > **’īyaqtil* = **’ī yaqtil*. It was only after this stage that the syncopated form of the article was used more extensively, pointing simply to wider use of close juncture than we find in Hebrew” (Lambdin 1971b: 330 fn. 25).

⁵⁰ Cf. also the Biblical theonyms *’adrammēlek* and *’ānammēlek*, the gods of the Sepharvaim (II Kings 17: 31)—cf. Buttrich et al. 1954 (s.v. 2 K 17: 31). These names (perhaps = ‘Adar/*Adad-the-King?’ ‘Anu-the-King?’) could plausibly come from a language with a definite article similar to that of Phoenician, as described by Lambdin.

*l- seems to have vanished in Aramaic. We may interpret this as an indication that there was a regular loss of the reflex of syllabified *l- in initial position.

| | | | | | |
|-------|------|--------|--------------|-----------------|-------------|
| | *' _ | | = *l-'Vp'al- | > *(a'-)'ip'al- | > *'-ip'al- |
| *l- + | *t- | -p'al- | = *l-tVp'al- | > *(at-)tip'al- | > *t-ip'al- |
| | *n- | | = *l-nVp'al- | > *(an-)nip'al- | > *n-ip'al- |
| | *y- | | = *l-ip'al- | > *l-ip'al- | > *l-ip'al- |

If this disappearance of (*#aC- <) *#l- was a regular phonological feature of Aramaic, we would expect it to have also taken place with the definite article. If we hypothesize that the definite noun phrase had roughly the same shape in pre-Aramaic as it did in Canaanite, we may find a plausible starting point for the Aramaic data if we posit that, as in Phoenician, the articles situated within the noun phrase were buffered from the effects of the phonological changes affecting word-initial position.

*[a'-'anθat aš-šappīrat aṭ-ṭābat]^{NP}
 *'the-woman the-beautiful the-good' >
 *'anθat-aš-šappīrat-aṭ-ṭābat
 (ult. > e.g., Syriac 'attəṭā šappīrəṭā ṭābəṭā)

The survival of the article outside of the phrase-initial position (whether in conjunction with modifying adjectives or with following genitives) could thus have served as the starting point for the development of the attested Aramaic system. Such a view is in accordance with the well-known observation that, in formal terms, the *status emphaticus* of Aramaic consists of the addition of the marker -ā to the construct form of the noun. Given the view of the development of the article expressed above, we may interpret this as due to the role played by the construct chain in ensuring the survival of the definite article: with the loss of *#aC- and the concomitant erasing of the formal definite/indefinite distinction throughout a large part of the substantival system, the construct chain, within which *aC- would have protected from deletion, would have served as an important repository for the article.⁵¹

⁵¹ The phonological aspect of the hypothetical survival of the Aramaic article despite the loss of phrase-initial *aC- calls to mind the survival of nunation in certain of the Central Arabian dialects. The final nasal element which (in conjunction with the absence of the article) indicates indefiniteness in Classical Arabic is routinely lost in most modern Arabic dialects—e.g., Classical *rajul-un ṭawīl-un* 'a tall man' nom. vs. Cairene *rāgil ṭawīl*. In certain Arabian dialects, however, a trace of the final syllable has been retained when it is embedded within an indefinite noun phrase. In such dialects the former marker of indefiniteness has come to serve as a connector linking an indefinite head and its modifiers (cf. Ingham 1982: 53-56).

Table 28: Proposed development of the Aramaic article

| Pre-Aramaic I | Pre-Aramaic II | Historical Aramaic |
|--|----------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| * <i>kalabīn</i> ‘dogs’ | * <i>kalabīn</i> | <i>kalbīn</i> (absolutus) |
| * <i>ak-kalabīn</i> ‘the-dogs’ | | <i>kalḥayy-ā</i> (emphaticus) |
| * <i>kalabay a’-’anθat</i> ‘(the) dogs (of) the-woman’ | * <i>kalabay a’-’anθat</i> | <i>kalḥē ’antāt-ā</i> (constructus) |

4.7.4.1 Southwest Semitic: Tigre

Within the Southwest Semitic group, we find that the Northern Ethiopic language Tigre employs an element which evidences a transparent connection to the topic at hand. In both form and function, the definite article *lā-* (*la*⁵²) of Tigre bears a close resemblance to Arabic (*a*)/*l-*.

... [G]enerally the determined substantive is expressed by the demonstrative element *lā-* prefixed to the substantive, especially when the substantive has already been mentioned in the sentence. The element *lā-* is invariable; it is the same for the masculine, feminine, singular, or plural; *lāsāb ’əḡal ḥad tāsālāmāw* “the men greeted each other,” *lāworot ’ənas ’əḡal lāmāllāhayu tāsā’alā* “the one man asked his fellow.” [Leslau 1945: 183]

The article is used in the construction expressing “that/those X,” prefixed to both the “X” and the following demonstrative—*wā-lā-’addām lā-hay* ‘and that man,’ *’əb lā-lali lā-ha* ‘on that night’—in a formation reminiscent of what we find in Northwest Semitic (cf. Hebrew *wə-hā’iš hā-hū* ‘and the-man the-that’). The Tigre article is also used regularly as a marker of relative clauses, in a construction which calls to mind the occasional use of the Arabic and Hebrew articles in this same function.⁵³

bīrin bu-ma ‘a well with water in it’ (Šammar)

ḡahawtin abahayyilha ‘some coffee which I want to mix cardamom with’ (‘Awāja)

⁵² Leslau (1948: 130) observes that *lā-* “is very often pronounced *la-*, thus *lakokab lawādqāt* ‘the star which fell’.”

⁵³ Although the number of such instances is limited in both Arabic and Hebrew, the fact of their agreeing that the article may be used as a relative clause suggests that there may well be something of considerable antiquity at the heart of this construction. The existence of a comparable syntagm in Tigre provides at least a certain amount of support for this notion. The prefixation of the */-particle to a relative clause is in agreement with the general rules governing the location of */- which were postulated above. It was proposed (§4.6.3) that the rules placing the asseverative */- in constructions containing an extraposed topic noun phrase mirrored the rules which governed */- in syntactically complex sentences: in each construction */- appeared before the last major constituent of the construction. In the previously discussed constructions, the extraposed noun phrase consisted of a nouns modified by an adjective or by a genitive. If a noun phrase in this position contained a relative clause, it is conceivable that the clause would have been counted as the final “major constituent” of the noun phrase, and thus might have attracted an */-particle.

wä-lä-wädqä kokäb ‘and the star that has fallen (*lä-wädqä*)’
lä-’adäg lä-tälä’akä ‘the donkey (*lä-’adäg*) which was sent (*lä-tälä’akä*)’
’ät ’akan lä-’əççät lä-bädär rä’aya ‘to the place of the tree (*lä-’əççät*) which
 he had seen before’ (*lä-bädär* = ‘which-before’)

At the same time, the Tigre article differs in certain respects from the articles sketched above (Leslau 1945: 183): with attributive adjectives it is found marking doubly head and modifier, as in Arabic and Hebrew (*lä-’anas lä-gəmuṣ* ‘the-man the-poor’), but may also be limited to either the noun (*lä-saga sänni* ‘the-meat good’) or the adjective (*lä-’abi məsməsa* ‘the-great reason’). In the construct chain, Tigre *lä-* appears prefixed not only to the “possessor” (*’asär lä-ḥayät* ‘(the) traces (of) the-lion’) as in Arabic and Hebrew, but also to the “possessed”—*kəm lä-gomat derho* ‘according to the-advice (of the) chicken,’ *lä-tuṭ lä-mäqtän* ‘the-sinew (of) the-back’—and it is also used with nouns marked with a possessive suffix—*lä-’aṣfär-om* ‘the-nails-their,’ *lä-’am’it-u* ‘the-entrails-his,’ *lä-mola-ye* ‘the-Lord-my.’

4.7.4.2 Southwest Semitic: Some further speculations

The *lä-* of Tigre is clearly reminiscent of the *la-* which we find in Gə‘əz *la-’amma* ‘if’ as the apparent reflex of the Semitic **l*-particle. Aside from the verbal *l*-marker described in Chapter Three, which occurs as a prefix in the jussive construction (Amharic *l-əsbär*, Mehri *l-ərke:z* (1 sg.), Tigre *l-əfgär*, Socotri *lik’ber* (3 m. sg.)) and which seems to be best ascribed to the non-syllabified manifestation of the proto-particle (**l-(’)Vp’al-*, **l-i-p’al-*), the remaining Southwest Semitic languages do not evidence elements containing an *l-* in the functions discussed in this chapter.⁵⁴ The situation calls to mind what we find among the Northwest Semitic languages, where the “*l*-ness” of the underlying particle has remained transparent only where it did not undergo syllabification. As we have seen, while it cannot be said

⁵⁴ John Huehnergard (personal communication) has suggested the possibility that the *la-* which Gə‘əz shows among its possessive constructions (*wald-u la-nəgus* ‘the son of the king,’ lit. ‘son-his *la*-king’) and its direct-object constructions (*rə’ikəww-o la-nəgus* ‘I saw the king,’ lit. ‘(I) saw-him *la*-king’) might also prove to be relevant to the discussion of the **l*-particle. Since such constructions seem to serve to convey the definiteness of the noun following the *la-*, it is entirely conceivable that we might be in the presence of another article-like reflex of early Semitic **l-*. On the other hand, there also remains a good possibility that the *la-* of these syntagms is to be analyzed as the preposition *la-* ‘to, for,’ which plays a role in possessive and object constructions in a number of Semitic languages. The fact that the noun in the Gə‘əz object-construction does not show the accusative ending (**rə’ikəww-o la-nəgus-a*) might be taken as evidence in favor of a prepositional interpretation of the *la-* here. This clearly remains an issue requiring further study.

with complete certainty the possibility exists that the various articles of the Northwest Semitic languages which have been mentioned above are to be traced back to the same source as the Arabic article, **l-*. The key to such a derivation lies in the possibility of **-aC-* being the normal *lautgesetzlich* reflex of a Semitic syllabic **l* in these languages—a premise which looks quite promising, in that it enables us not only to identify a plausible source for the definite article but also to comprehend the puzzling morphology of the irregular verb **√lqh*.

I would like to hazard some conjectures of a considerably more speculative sort with regard to the languages of the Southwest Semitic area, and specifically of the Modern South Arabian group. Historical research into these languages is as yet in its infancy, and even the most prosaic aspects of their phonological development remain matters of educated guesswork. In the absence of a convincing explanation for all of the various shapes assumed by an element as familiar as the normal Semitic vowel **a* (see Lonnet and Simeone-Sennelle 1997: 351-353), the situation would not appear to be auspicious for seeking reflexes of the much more restricted syllabic **l* which we posit here. Nonetheless, there is material to be found here which is of potential relevance to this issue.

It has become clear from recent descriptive work on the Modern South Arabian group that these languages have a definite article. In Mehri and Haršūši the article appears in the shapes *h(a)-/h(a)-* or *a-/ə-*; in Mehri it is restricted to words beginning with a voiced or emphatic consonant. Cf. the following Haršūši passages:

lāhi sklin yadənóot; asklin haydənóot tənóofa haabúub ‘I have a new knife. The new knife is (viz. new knives are) useful to people’⁵⁵
u-həbərúuk həbéerhe bərk níihər k’annáwn, wəláakən anliihər bəh əmtuwé həbéer ‘and he couched his camels in a little side-valley, in which, however, there was [lit. ‘but the side-valley, therein (was)’] fodder for the camels’

In Jibbali, frozen traces of what seems to be an article *h-* like that of Mehri are also to be found (cf. *hákt* (*ε*) ‘when’ < *ékt* ‘time’). In addition, Jibbali has a productive article consisting of a prefixed vowel *e-*, often

⁵⁵ Johnstone 1970 (= examples 11 and 44). In addition, these languages show an unetymological *h-* at the beginning of a number of nouns which Johnstone took to result from the incorporation of the article into the lexical shape of the word. Cf. Mehri examples ‘mother’ *haam* ‘mother’ (Arabic *‘umm-*), *hayb* ‘father’ (Arabic *‘abū-*), *hayáwm* ‘sun’ (Arabic *yawm-* ‘day’), *harú(h)* ‘head’ (Arabic *ra’s-*)—see Johnstone 1970: 299-300.

accompanied by gemination of the following consonant (Johnstone 1980; 1981: xxix-xxx).⁵⁶

| | |
|---|---|
| <i>e-ḳēlb</i> 'heart' (indef. <i>ḳēlb</i>) | <i>e-ffá'm</i> 'foot' (indef. <i>fa'm</i>) |
| <i>e-dík</i> 'cock' (indef. <i>dík</i>) | <i>e-/ε-kkef</i> 'paw, claw, palm' (indef. <i>kef</i>) |
| <i>e-šúm</i> 'name' (indef. <i>šum</i>) | <i>ε-xxe:r</i> 'the-news' (indef. <i>xe:r</i>) |

Given the existence of a Modern South Arabian article with the shape **(h)V-*, we may ask ourselves whether there is a possibility of relating such a form to the hypothetical West Semitic article **l-/*/l-*. Strictly speaking, the answer to this question is that we lack an adequate grasp of the historical phonology of these languages to respond with anything other than guesswork. It is worth noting, nevertheless, that, in addition to the article, Jibbali shows a verbal particle *h(a)-* which it employs prefixed to the subjunctive as a marker of the future—(*d-*)*ha-yšktəb* 'he will write,' *h-ihí* 'he will search.' While it may be coincidence, the close resemblance between the article and the future marker calls to mind the common source which we have sought to identify for both the definite article and the asseverative/precativ particle—the latter of which, as we have seen, is closely associated with the realm of futurity.⁵⁷

These Modern South Arabian data may also be of relevance to questions surrounding certain Arabic dialects of the southern Arabian region. We find dialects in the Yemeni highlands in which the definite article assumes the quite un-Arabic shape *aC-* (or *iC-*), with gemination of the following initial consonant regardless of its point of articulation;⁵⁸ likewise there are Yemeni dialects documented which employ a similar-looking prefix (*aC-*) as a prefix marking futurity—*inn ant attúskut* (Goitein 1934: xix).⁵⁹

It may be asked whether in these curious features the Arabic dialects in question might have preserved traces of contact with an early representative of the Modern South Arabian group.⁶⁰ If this is so, we may speculate that at an early stage the common shape of the article and the future marker was

⁵⁶ The quality of the vowel is influenced by the following syllable if the word begins with a pharyngeal or a laryngeal: *o-hút* vs. *hút* 'big fish,' *'āḡaréb* vs. *'aḡaréb* 'raven.' As elsewhere in Jibbali, the labials *b-* and *m-* are lost intervocalically: *ērḳ* vs. *bérḳ* 'knee,' *īdīḳ* vs. *māndīḳ* 'rifle' (Johnstone 1981: xxix-xxx). Since gemination seems to have been lost at an early stage of the development of the Modern South Arabian languages, the gemination found with the article is presumably secondary, although its source remains to be determined.

⁵⁷ Whether in conjunction with modality (cf. Arabic *li-yaktub* 'may he write!') or without modality (Arabic *la-yaktuban(na)* 'he will surely write').

⁵⁸ Cf. also Rhodokanakis' description of the article of Ḍhofar, cited above.

⁵⁹ The dialect described by Goitein is that of urban Jews from Ṣan'ā' and 'Amrān.

⁶⁰ See Testen (1992a) for a similar interpretation of the development of certain of the dialects of northern Yemen.

*(*ħ*)*aC-*, with the gemination subsequently lost in the Modern South Arabian languages themselves but preserved in the Arabic languages with which they were formerly in contact.

As an extremely tentative hypothesis, it might therefore be hazarded that in the ancestor of the Modern South Arabian languages the early Semitic syllabified **l* assumed the shape **ħaC-* or **aC-*, in a manner similar to that in which the **l* appears to have been resolved in the ancestor of Hebrew.

| | | |
|-----------------------------|---|----------------------------|
| * <i>l</i> - <i>taktub-</i> | > Early MSA *(<i>ħ</i>) <i>at-taktVb-</i> | > Jibbali <i>ħa-tʃktəb</i> |
| * <i>l</i> - <i>šVm-</i> | *(<i>ħ</i>) <i>aš-šVm-</i> | <i>e-šúm</i> |
| | ? ↓ ? | |
| | ? Šan‘āni Jewish <i>aC-</i> future | |
| | Regional Yemeni <i>aC-</i> article | |

It may consequently be more than coincidence that in the Ethiopic languages, which are taken to be closely akin to the Modern South Arabian languages, we find a comparable phenomenon *-aC-* occurring specifically in one position where we have been led to reconstruct **l*. The reflexes of one of the Common Semitic negating particles, it will be recalled (§3.4.2), display a set of vocalic correspondences which leads us to reconstruct a syllabic **l*—cf. Gə‘əz *’al*, Hebrew *’al* vs. Akkadian *ul*. In certain instances involving close juncture, we find that the *-l* of Ethiopic *’al* is lost with concomitant gemination of the following consonant, despite the fact that assimilation of *l* is not a regular feature of the phonology of these languages. Compare, in this respect, certain of the negated verbal forms (the imperfective and the imperative) of Southern Ethiopic languages such as Amharic (Leslau 1968: 165-166, 250-251).⁶¹

| | Negative Present | Negative Imperative |
|--------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| 1 Sg. | <i>alsäbrəm</i> | <i>aləsbär</i> |
| 2 Masc. Sg. | <i>at(tə)säbrəm</i> | <i>attəsbär</i> |
| 2 Fem. Sg. | <i>at(tə)säbrim</i> | <i>attəsbäri</i> |
| 3 Masc. Sg. | <i>aysäbrəm</i> | <i>ayəsbär</i> |
| 3 Fem. Sing. | <i>at(tə)säbrəm</i> | <i>attəsbär</i> |

Table 29: Amharic negative present
and negative imperative paradigms (ex. *säbbärä* ‘break’)

In the absence of assimilation as a regular feature of Ethiopic *l*, it is conceivable that we find here a trace of a development of **-l-* > **-aC-* (e.g., *at(tə)säbrəm* < **’l-tVθab(b)Vr-*) comparable to what we have conjectured

⁶¹ Cf. also the negative element *’akko* ‘not’ (< **’al-* + *-ko*) of Gə‘əz.

above for the article and the future marker of the Modern South Arabian languages.

4.8 Conclusion

It must be granted that the discussion above concerning the languages of the Northwest and Southwest Semitic areas has been exploiting our ignorance, in the sense that, just as we cannot say that we know with any certainty what the outcome of an early Semitic */ would have been in these languages, we cannot say what it would not have been. Under the circumstances, we are entitled to examine the possibility that elements in these languages which share the functions of the Arabic descendants of the particle */- and have no clear origin otherwise may in fact constitute formal reflexes of */- as well. The fact that the functional duality seen in the Arabic reflexes of */- (viz. the article-function vs. the asseveration-function) is recapitulated in the duality found in the Modern South Arabian data (the article-function vs. the futurity-function) lends this hypothesis a fair degree of *a priori* plausibility. Only the adduction of further data, of course, will provide an ultimate resolution to the phonological aspect of the issue. In the case of the Northwest Semitic languages, such further data will provide the subject of the following chapter.

It will be noticed that certain issues which routinely arise in discussions of the West Semitic definite article have not been addressed, or have been addressed at most tangentially. One such issue is that of the Lihyanite article *h(n)*-, which, as we have seen (§4.5.1), some have taken to be a "missing link" connecting the Northwest Semitic and Arabic articles. Another issue of potential relevance lies in the nasal article of a series of Arabic dialects of Yemen (Rabin 1951: 35-37; Behnstedt 1987: XXV-XXVI, 85-86, map 27) in which we find an article of the form *im*-, *in*-, *an*- (e.g., *im-šams*, *im-gamar* from *im*-Maṭṭah near Sa'da).⁶² Examples of this nasal article were also recorded in early Arabic sources (Kofler 1940: 73-75).

laysa min m-birri m-šiyāmu fī m-safar 'fasting during the journey is not part of piety (= literary *al-birri*)'

yarmī warā'ī bi-m-sahmi wa-m-salama 'he shoots in my defense with the arrow and the sling'⁶³

⁶² The form *imbāriḥ* 'yesterday' (equivalent to literary Arabic *al-bāriḥa*), which evidently originated in such a dialect, has become especially widespread throughout a number of modern Arabic dialects.

⁶³ "... Said by Jauharī (Sahāḥ, ii, 298) to be Himyaritic, but Lisān, xx, 347 and elsewhere ascribed to Bujair b. Ghanama ('Athama) of Ṭayyi'..." (Rabin 1951: 36).

While interesting, these phenomena suffer from the fact that we have little or no knowledge of the historical phonology of the dialects in which they developed, and hence little opportunity to evaluate them *vis-à-vis* the entire complex of Semitic data on the definite article. We are handicapped in our ignorance, in the sense that we have no grounds for ruling out anything as a possible account for these facts. From the standpoint of the current exposition, it would in principle be entirely possible to speculate that there may have been a dialect or dialects in which the posited */- underwent a nasalizing development—just as it would be no less possible to take these articles to represent parallel developments entirely unrelated to the */- article. Without a better understanding of their source, these forms remain little more than thought-provoking reminders of the vastness of the expanse of information which history has chosen to conceal from us.

CHAPTER FIVE

COMPARANDA HEBRAICA

5.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter it was proposed (§4.7.2) that we regard the correspondence between the definite articles of Arabic and Hebrew—(a)l-/ (a)C- and (h)aC-, respectively—as the outcome of the regular phonological development of an early Semitic particle *l-, which, when certain circumstances in the phonological environment obtained, acquired syllabicity (*l̥). Central to such an interpretation is the hypothesis that the putative *l̥ developed into -aC- in Hebrew. We have seen that, even leaving aside the issue of the definite article, grounds for entertaining such a view are to be found in the inflection of the irregular verb *lāqah* ‘take,’ the peculiar imperfective form of which (*’eqqaḥ*, *tiqqaḥ*, *yiqqaḥ*, etc., instead of the expected **’elqaḥ*, etc.) may best be viewed as containing the outcome of a radical *l̥ which has been syllabified under the influence of its position between the preceding person-marker (‘-, t-, y-, n-) and the following radical *q—thus, *’- + -lqaḥ- → *’l̥qaḥ- > *’aqqah- > (by Barth’s law) *’iqqaḥ- > Hebrew *’eqqaḥ*.

A hypothesis of this sort by its nature cannot, of course, be proved in the technical sense of the word. In the absence of incontrovertible empirical data documenting the existence of a prehistoric Semitic *l̥, the case for such an entity can consist of no more than an evaluation of the relative benefits and costs to the Semitic theoretical construct as a whole which are inherent in the claim. The fact that the analysis presented in Chapter Four has provided a framework for independently interpreting two otherwise inadequately explained and, to all superficial appearances, unrelated anomalies—viz. the riddle of the development of the article and the curious paradigm of *lāqah*—may be counted in its favor. It enables us to collapse the unexpected appearance of a single phonological phenomenon (gemination) in two separate morphological situations (the article and the details of a specific verb’s paradigm) under a single heading, by deriving each from a single, identifiable phonological situation—the occurrence of a Proto-Semitic *l̥ without an adjacent vowel.

Is there, however, no further evidence to be adduced in support of the derivation of certain instances of Hebrew (h)aC- from a Semitic *l̥? More specifically, what may be said from the point of view of Hebrew about the original “emphasizing” particle *l̥- which, we have conjectured, lies at the heart of the development of the definite article of Arabic, that of Hebrew (in

all likelihood), and quite possibly those of a number of other Semitic languages? We have taken the definite article to be the result of a regrammaticalization of what was originally a syntactically defined subset of the occurrences of the asseverative marker **l-*; indeed, in terms of the drastic limitations upon Arabic *la-* as we find it attested, the asseverative marker *la-* as it is documented may be said to be little more than the remnants of the original **l-* which have escaped this grammaticalization. If the Hebrew *(h)aC-* is to be compared with the Arabic article, it too is presumably to be traced back to a reorientation of what was originally an asseverative marker. It should therefore be asked whether anything remains in Hebrew of the **l*-particle in its original function.

If the article *(h)aC-* is to be traced back to a simple prefixed **l-*, we would expect to see that a Hebrew counterpart to the “emphatic” manifestation of **l-* would have assumed the same shape, **(h)aC-*. This expectation lends a further, complicating dimension to the ongoing debate concerning possible traces of a *lamed emphaticum* in Biblical Hebrew (§3.3.6). In a curious sense, the very fact that there is a superficial similarity between the *lamed* in the problematical biblical passages in question and the Arabic *la-* vitiates the argument for assuming a connection between the two: until we can identify some means of explaining why the particle **l-* should have taken the form *(h)aC-* in one situation and the form *lə-* in another, we must continue to maintain an attitude of agnosticism toward the various problematical passages which have been adduced to prove the existence of a *lamed emphaticum*.

5.2 A “*hē emphaticum*” in Biblical Hebrew?

The case for equating the Arabic *la-* with the problematical occurrences of Hebrew *lə-* is further mitigated by the fact that there does in fact exist evidence suggesting that the expected Hebrew cognate to *la-*, *(h)aC-*, is attested in the Bible, although that evidence has been only partially recognized. A proclitic letter <h> is regularly found in Biblical Hebrew in one of two functions. The first of these, the definite article, has been discussed above in Chapter Four. The second manifestation of *h-* is represented by the particle *hā-*, found in sentence-initial position as a marker of “yes-no” questions.

hā-min-hā'eš 'āšer šiwwîtkā ləbîltî 'ākāl-mimme'nnû 'ākāltā (Gen. 3: 11)
 ‘*hā*-From the tree from which I commanded you not to eat have you eaten?’

way-yo(')mer YHWH 'el-qáyin 'ê hēbel 'āhîkā way-yo(')mer lo(') yāda'tî
hā-šomer 'āhî 'ānokî (Gen. 4: 9) ‘God said to Cain, “Where is Abel your brother?” and he said, “I do not know. Am I the keeper (*hā-šomer*) of my brother?”...’

Although this *hē interrogativum* is a very familiar element of Biblical Hebrew grammar, there are certain aspects of this particle which remain inadequately understood. In a number of places the *hē* is accompanied by an unexplained gemination of the first consonant of the word to which it is prefixed. Consequently, the form assumed by this element mirrors that of the definite article. The following passages are taken from the set of examples assembled by Sperber (1966: 623-625).

hen hayyôm hiqrîbû 'et-ḥaṭṭâ(')tām wə-'et-'olātām lipnê YHWH... hay-yîṭab bə'ênê YHWH (Levit. 10: 19) 'If today they bring their sin-offering and offerings before God... will this be good (*hay-yîṭab*) in God's eyes?'

kô 'amar 'ădonây YHWH hab-bəḏérêk 'ăbôṭêkēm 'attēm niṭmā'im wə'ahārê šiqqûšêhem 'attēm zonîm (Ezekiel 20: 30) 'Thus says the Lord God: in the road (*hab-bəḏérêk*) of your fathers are you defiling yourselves, and are you lusting after their abominations?'

mî yôde^a rū^ah bənê hā'ădām hā-'olâ hî(') lāmā'lâ wərû^ah habbāhemâ hay-yorēḏet hî(') lammaṭṭâ lā'āreš (Ecc. 3: 21) 'who knows the spirit of mankind, whether it ascends (*hā-'olâ¹*) ..., or the spirit of the beast, whether it descends (*hay-yorēḏet*)...'

In the last of the examples above, the presence of the pharyngeal -' has led to loss of the gemination. This corresponds to the absence of gemination in the definite article when it is followed by a "guttural" or *r*, and the concomitant changes in the vowel on the whole parallel those of the article.²

he-hāšeḇ 'ăšîb 'et-binkā 'el-hā'āreš 'ăšer yāšā(')tā miššām (Gen. 24: 5) 'Shall I return (*he-* + inf. absolute *hāšeḇ*) your son to the land from which you came?'

wə'attēm he'āsərû wəyibbāhānû dibrêkēm hā-'ēmēt 'ittākēm wə'im lo(') hē par'ô kî māraggəlîm 'attēm (Gen. 42: 16) '... but you will be kept prisoners and your words examined (to determine) whether you have spoken the truth ("whether truth is with you" *hā-'ēmēt 'ittākēm³*), and if not, by Pharaoh's life, you are spies'

¹ Compare the definite article in *hā-'olâ* in Judges 21: 19.

² On the whole, the distinction between the two shapes of the interrogative is erased in the environment of a following "guttural." A few passages show a distinction between the normal *ha-* (e.g., *ha-'attâ*) and an exceptional *hā-* (e.g., *hā-'olâ* above) which evidently corresponds to the distinction between the normal *hā-* and its counterpart *haC-*.

³ Compare the definite article in *hā-'ēmēt* in Genesis 32: 11.

We thus find that the interrogative *hē* of Biblical Hebrew has two distinct shapes. The first of these, *hā-*, may be compared to the Arabic interrogative particle *'a-*, which, like *hā-*, is prefixed to the first word in its clause; we may suppose that both are descended from an ancestral **a-*, with the *h-/'* added to the initial vowel independently in the two languages (§4.7.2.3).⁴ The second shape assumed by the Hebrew interrogative marker is more problematical. The basic form of this second shape appears to have been *haC-*, and, were it not for the fact that, as we have seen, a syllable-final *lamed* does not normally undergo assimilation, it might be tempting to compare this form with the Arabic interrogative particle *hal*. In the absence of such an assimilation, however, a derivation from an original **hal* remains unallowably *ad hoc*.

It should be noted that, since the diacritic marks indicating the vowels of the Hebrew Bible are much younger than the consonantal portion of the text (as is the *dageš* indicating gemination), some researchers have chosen to dismiss some or all of these anomalous forms of the interrogative as late corruptions introduced by the Masoretes. It remains unclear, however, why textual innovations of this sort would have led to an unsystematic proliferation of forms, rather than to the elimination of eccentricities—if there had been a reshaping of the interrogative particle on the part of the Masoretes, it is more likely that it would have consisted of an expansion of what has become the “normal” *hā-* at the expense of the anomalous *haC-*, particularly in those environments in which the latter runs the risk of being taken for the definite article. Indeed, in the isolated remnants of *haC-* which the text has retained it is possible, following the principle of the *lectio difficilior*, that we find an indication of what was originally a much more widespread phenomenon but has, in large measure, fallen victim to the activities of the later redactors.

In short, taking the biblical text at face value we find that early Hebrew seems to have had two parallel elements serving as markers of “yes-no” questions. Although there has evidently been a degree of merger between the two elements, they may still be distinguished with considerable confidence both by their effects upon a following consonant and by their vowel.

⁴ It is sometimes observed that the vowel *-ā-* appears even in pretonic position, where it is possible that one would expect Semitic **a* to have yielded Hebrew *-ā-*. The vowel *-ā-*, which represents an allophone of *a* in the environment of *h-*, does seem to be appropriate as the reflex of Semitic **a* in a proclitic particle, however—compare *hā-yôm* ‘(interrogative)-a day...’ (< **a-yawm-*) and *kā-yôm* ‘like a day’ (< **ka-yawm-*).

Table 30: Forms of the Hebrew interrogative *h-*

| Following environment: | Interrogative ₁ (<i>hǎ-</i>) | Interrogative ₂ (<i>haC-</i>) |
|--|--|---|
| Non-“guttural” + vowel other than <i>a</i> | <i>hǎ-</i> | <i>haC-</i> |
| Non-“guttural” + <i>a</i> ⁵ | <i>ha-</i> | <i>haC-</i> |
| “Guttural” + vowel other than <i>a</i> | <i>ha-</i> | <i>hǎ-</i> |
| “Guttural” + <i>a</i> | <i>hě-</i> | |

At the same time, we observe that there are occasions on which the interrogative function ascribed to the prefixed *h*-particle(s) seems to be somewhat off the mark. In these cases, the sentence in which the particle occurs seems to constitute less a request for information than a statement of fact. Of course, interrogative constructions may be used in Hebrew, as they are in English, with rhetorical effect. As in English, however, such questions typically are framed in such a way as to elicit a response opposite to the proposition contained in the question—e.g., *hǎ-šomer 'āhî 'ānokî* (Gen. 4: 9) ‘Am I my brother’s keeper?’ is meant to be answered in the negative. Nonetheless, we occasionally encounter passages which are neither intended as requests for information nor phrased with the semantic reversal typical of rhetorical questions. Consider the following examples (which have traditionally been read as non-negative rhetorical questions) selected from among those assembled by Croatto (1971).

hǎ-niglô niglêti 'el-bêt 'ābîkâ bihyôtām bamišráyim ləbêt par'ô (I Samuel 2: 27) ‘*hǎ*-I revealed Myself to the house of your father when they were in Egypt at the house of Pharaoh’

*hǎ-gānoḥ rāšo^ah wənā'op wəhiššābe^a laššēqer wəqatṭel labbā'al wəhāloḵ 'ahārē 'ēlohim 'āherim 'āšer lo(')-yāda'tem ūbā(')tem wā'āmadtem ləpānay babbáyit hazze^h 'āšer niqrā'-šəmî 'ālāw... (Jeremiah 7: 9-10) ‘*hǎ*-(After) stealing and murdering and committing adultery and swearing falsely and offering incense to Ba'al and walking after other gods which you did not know, you come and stand before Me in this house which is called by My name...’*

hǎ-ben yaqīr lî 'epráyim (Jeremiah 31: 20) ‘*hǎ*-A beloved son to me is Ephraim...’

kô 'āmar YHWH hǎ-rāšāhtā wəgam yārāštā... way-yo(')mēr 'ah'āb 'el-eliyyāhū ha-māšā(')tānî 'oyəbî (I Kings 21: 19-20) ‘Thus says God:

⁵ We find that, to a certain degree, the two interrogatives merge in this environment, since we not infrequently encounter cases of the elimination of *dageš* before *a*, generally when the consonant preceding the *a* is *m* or *y*. Under the circumstances, it is at times impossible to determine whether a form such as *hayəqatṭel* is to be traced to *hay-yəqatṭel* or to **hǎ-yəqatṭel*.

“*hā*-You have murdered and moreover usurped”... and Ahab said to Elijah “*ha*-You have found me, my enemy”...’

hā-tiṣpoṭ ‘*otām hā-tiṣpōṭ bēn-’ādām* ‘*et-tō’ābōṭ* ‘*ābōṭām hōdī’em* (Ezekiel 20: 4) ‘*hā*-You shall judge them, *hā*-you shall judge, O man, of the abominations of their fathers inform them’⁶

hā-’iš ‘*εḥād yehēṭā*’ *wā-’al kāl-hā’edā tiqṣop* (Numbers 16: 22) ‘*hā*-A single man sins, and against the entire community You are angered’

The translations given above take the form of statements, rather than the questions found in most translations (“Did I (not) reveal myself...?” “Will you steal...?” “Have you found me...?”). In Croatto’s opinion, “[i]l vaut mieux y voir un « h » affirmatif dont le sens primitif n’a pas été saisi dans un stade évolue de la langue” (1971: 395).⁷ To be sure, some of the passages cited by Croatto do not sound unnatural as rhetorical questions, particularly if read in a tone of incredulity or indignation—e.g., “Are You angered against all of us when only a single individual is sinning?” (Numbers 16: 22) or “Do you come and stand before Me, after all that you have done!?” (Jeremia 7: 9-10)—but many of them do. Moreover, Croatto cites several passages containing a prefixed <h> which, while traditionally taken to be the article, seems to function more as some form of “emphasizer.”

mākorotāyik ūmolədotāyik me’ēreṣ hakkān’ānī ‘*ābīk hā-’ēmorī wā’immek hittīt* (Ezekiel 16: 3) ‘your origin and your birth are of the land of the Canaanite, your father (is) *hā*-an Amorite, and your mother (is) a Hittite’

... *wā-hā-’ēben gəḏōlā* ‘*al pī habbā’er*... (Gen. 29: 2) ‘and *hā*-(there was) a great stone on the mouth of the well...’

In the first of these two passages, the parallelism between the two predicates *hā-’ēmorī* and *hittīt* renders it unlikely that we should read *hā*- as the article. In Gen. 29: 2, both the syntax and the context are incompatible with taking the *hā*- to be the article: we would have to view *gəḏōlā* either as the predicate (“... and the stone (was) great...”) or as an attributive adjective uncharacteristically not marked for agreement (rather than the anticipated **hā-’ēben hag-gəḏōlā* ‘the-stone the-great’). In either case we find it difficult to explain why *’ēben* should be definite, since the text treats the relation of the stone to the well as unfamiliar to the reader, and finds it

⁶ Cf. likewise Ezekiel 22: 2 and 23: 36.

⁷ “Joseph Kimchi clearly construed the example of 1 Sam 2:27 as a statement of corroboration... He was anticipated by Ibn Janah, who maintained that the *he* was for emphasis and verification...” (Waldman 1989: 38-39).

necessary to elaborate with a description of the situation in the following verse.

... *wə-hā-'ēben gəḏōlā 'al pī habbā'er wəne'esəpū-šāmmā kāl-hā'āḏārīm*
wəgālālū 'et-hā'ēben me'al pī hab-bā'er wəhišqū 'et-haš-šo(')n
wəhešibū 'et-hā'ēben 'al-pī habbā'er liḡomāh (Gen. 29: 2-3) 'and
hā-(there was) a great stone on the mouth of the well, and all the
 flocks would gather there and they would roll the stone away from the
 mouth of the well and water the sheep and return the stone to its place
 over the mouth of the well'

In light of our hypothesis about the origin of the Hebrew article *haC-*, it is appropriate to ask whether at least certain of the problematical occurrences of the prefixed *h-* might represent survivals of the particle **l-*. It is interesting to note that, to a certain degree, the location of the *h-* in several of the Hebrew passages adduced parallels the position of the Arabic asseverative *la-*. In Genesis 29: 2, for example, *hā-'ēben gəḏōlā 'al pī habbā'er* '*hā*-(there was) a great stone on the mouth of the well' is conspicuously reminiscent of the Arabic construction *la-rajulun fī l-dāri* '*la*-(there is) a man in the house' (§4.6.3), while '*ābīkā hā-'ēmorī* (Ezekiel 16: 3) 'your father *hā*-(is) an Amorite' calls to mind '*ummu l-ḥulaysi la-'ajūzun šahraba* 'Umm al-Ḥulays *la*-(is) an old woman.' Indeed, one might ask whether the curious construction *hā-tišpoṭ*—which is repeated three times (Ezekiel 20: 4, 22: 2, 23: 36), suggesting that it may have once been a conventionalized formula—might not be a fossilized remnant of the jussive function of **l-* which we find reflected in Arabic *li-taḥḥal* and Akkadian *lu taprus*—i.e., an archaic *htšp(w)ṭ* = **hat-tišpoṭ* 'may you judge!' (< **l-t'ṭpuṭ*) which has been taken by the Masoretes to stand for the interrogative *hā-tišpoṭ*.⁸ It may be noted that examples such as the following are just as amenable to an "emphatic" reading as they are to the interrogative reading which they have traditionally been given.

kō 'āmar 'āḏonāy YHWH hab-bəḏérək 'ābôtēkēm 'attem niṭmā'im wə'ahārē
šiqqūšēhem 'attem zonīm (Ezekiel 20: 30) 'Thus says the Lord God:
 Truly, in the road (*hab-bəḏérək*) of your fathers you are defiling
 yourselves, and after their abominations you are lusting!'

⁸ Note the presence of the adjacent imperatives *hōḏī'em* and *hagged* in Ezek. 20: 4 and 23: 36. The Syriac translation employs the imperative *dūn* corresponding to *hā-tišpoṭ* in the passages in question, and may well reflect the original jussive sense which is posited here for *htšp(w)ṭ*—*dūn 'ennōn dūn 'ennōn bar nāšā* 'judge them, judge them, O man!' (Ezek. 20: 4). The Septuagint seems to have been baffled by *htšp(w)ṭ*—cf. *Ei ekdikēsō autoūs ekdikēsei* (20: 4), *ei krineis* (22: 2), *ou krineis* (23: 36).

Given the two spheres of uncertainty surrounding the Hebrew interrogative marker—i.e., the two shapes assumed by the particle coupled with the two functions (interrogative vs. “emphatic”) for which it seems to be used—it is not inconceivable that we find ourselves in the presence of two originally distinct elements which have collapsed into a single, somewhat ill-defined element. We might thereby be capable of answering (at least in part) the question posed at the outset of this chapter: once the definite article split off from the original Semitic **l*-particle, the remaining manifestations of the **l*-particle (i.e., its original asseverative and jussive functions), now in the form **(h)aC-*, might well have been largely engulfed by the interrogative marker **(h)a-*. It may plausibly be conjectured that the indeterminacy which we now observe in the form of the interrogative marker *hā-/haC-* of Biblical Hebrew results from the merger of these two originally independent particles.

Table 31: The merger of interrogative and “emphatic” *h-* in Hebrew

| | | | |
|----------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------|
| I. Proto-Semitic | Interrogative <i>*a-</i> | Asseverative-jussive <i>*l-</i> | |
| II. Early W. Semitic | <i>*a-</i> | Assev.-juss. <i>*l-</i> | Article <i>*l-</i> |
| III. Early Hebrew | <i>*ha-</i> | <i>*haC-</i> | <i>*(h)aC-</i> |
| IV. Masoretic Hebrew | <i>hā-</i> | (<i>haC-</i>) | (<i>h</i>) <i>aC-</i> |

5.3.1 *The waw-consecutive of Hebrew*

It consequently appears that certain of the authentic Hebrew reflexes of the **l*-particle may have been “siphoned off” through reinterpretation as instances of the interrogative *h-*. A more important issue which is involved in the mapping out of the Hebrew reflexes of the **l*-particle, however, lies in the well-known problem of the *waw*-consecutive (or “*waw*-conversive”) of Biblical Hebrew.⁹ The use of the prefixed form of the finite verb (*yiqtol*) to reflect the narrative past—despite the fact that the prefixed form typically is used to render the present or future—is a very familiar feature of the

⁹ In the present study we are concerned only with the prefixed manifestation of what is known as the *waw*-consecutive, and leave aside the problem of the suffixed-form *waw*-consecutive. There is no intrinsic reason to assume that the use of suffixed-form verbs following the conjunction *wā-* to reflect futurity—e.g., *wā-ḥizzaqtī ‘et-leḥ-par’o^h wā-rāḏap ‘ahārêhem...* (Exodus 14: 4) ‘And I shall harden (*wā-ḥizzaqtī*) the heart of Pharaoh and he will pursue (*wā-rāḏap*) after them’—has any direct bearing upon the prefixed-form phenomenon to be discussed here, and hence we have no *a priori* grounds to regard these two issues as reflecting a single phenomenon, a “conversive” influence exerted by the conjunction *wā*. We are thus justified in treating *way-yiqtol* ‘(and) he killed’ as, for all practical purposes, unrelated to *wā-qāṭal* ‘and he will kill,’ particularly since the main concern in what follows will be (a) essentially formal and (b) concentrated upon the first syllable of the construction, which is not comparable in the two constructions (*waC-* vs. *wā-*).

syntax of Biblical Hebrew,¹⁰ and has been the object of an enormous amount of discussion and disagreement over the years (cf., e.g., Waltke and O'Connor 1990: 544-547 and the literature cited there).

In formal terms, the *waw*-consecutive consists of the prefixation of the syllable *waC-* (i.e., of a syllable *wa-* followed by the gemination of the following consonant) to the prefixed form of the finite verb, which is always in clause-initial position. This *waC-* does double duty, serving both to mark the nature of the verbal construction and to conjoin the clause in question to a preceding clause, if there is one. It is therefore regularly (albeit not invariably) assumed that the *waC-* is to be related in some fashion to the conjunction *wə-* 'and,' although the details of the connection remain disputed. Despite the apparent presence of the conjunction 'and,' the *waC-* may occur as the first element in a text, as in the opening of II Kings below.

*way-yipša' mō'āb bəyisrā'el 'ahārē mōt 'ah'āb way-yippol 'āhazyā bə'ad
hasšəbāḱā ba'āliyyātō 'āšer bəšomrōn way-yāḥal way-yišlah mal'ākīm
way-yo(')mer 'ālehem... (II Kings 1-2) '(And) rebelled (way-yipša')
Moab against Israel after the death of Ahab. And fell (way-yippol)
Ahaziah through the lattice in his upper chamber which was in
Samaria, and (he) fell sick (way-yāḥal), and (he) sent (way-yišlah)
messengers, and (he) said (way-yo(')mer) to them...'*

The shapes assumed by the weak verb-classes when they occur in the *waw*-consecutive construction make it clear that the original form of the verb was the apocopated or "jussive" manifestation of the verb (i.e., **waC-yaqtul-Ø*),¹¹ which, as we have seen in Chapter Three, elsewhere serves to express wishes or commands. The preterite sense which we find expressed in the *waw*-consecutive thus calls to mind the preterite use of the apocopated verbal form in other Semitic languages—cf. the Akkadian preterite form *iprus*, the Arabic negative past construction *lam yaf'al* (see §5.3.4), and the irregular Gə'əz verb *yəbe* '(he) said.' To all appearances, therefore, the preterite reference of the Hebrew *waw*-consecutive *way-yiqtol* '(and) he killed' represents the survival of one of the chief functions of the apocopated verb-form of early Semitic, alongside the modal functions

¹⁰ "The frequency of the *wayyiqtol* form hardly requires comment: 29% of the finite verbs in the Hebrew Bible show this form (14,972 cases...)..." (Waltke and O'Connor 1990: 544).

¹¹ Cf., e.g., *way-yāḥal* in II Kings: 2 above. The corresponding long/indicative form of this verb would have been **way-yahāle^h*.

which were seen in Chapter Three above (cf. Akkadian *l-iprus*, Arabic, *l(i)-yaf'al*, Hebrew *yəhî*, etc.).¹²

Given the existence of Arabic *lam yaf'al* and Akkadian *iprus*, there is nothing inherently incomprehensible, from the comparative Semitic point of view, in a prefixed-form verb having a preterite value, as the verb in the Hebrew *way-yiqtol* construction has. What is noteworthy is that a formal distinction, in the shape of the element *waC-*, has evidently been introduced in order to support the functional bifurcation of the apocopated verb form. This is not without parallel. While it is appropriate to reconstruct both preterital and modal functions simultaneously for the early Semitic apocopated form, nowhere among the descendent languages do we find this functional duality preserved undisturbed. In most cases, there have been secondary developments serving to mark the distinction formally.¹³

Table 32: Secondary differentiation of the apocopated verb-form

| Proto-Semitic *yi-CCVC-Ø 'he X-ed' ~ 'may he X!' | | |
|---|--|--|
| Arabic <i>lam yaf'al</i> 'he did not' <i>l(i)-yaf'al</i> 'may he do!' | Hebrew <i>way-yəhî</i> '(and) he was' <i>yəhî</i> 'may he be!' | Akkadian <i>iprus</i> 'he divided' <i>l-iprus</i> 'may he divide!' |

In both Arabic and Akkadian the **l*-particle has been utilized to introduce a secondary distinction, the particle in each case having become grammaticalized as an integral part of the wish/command construction. In Hebrew, by contrast, it is the jussive function of the apocopated form which has been retained unmarked, while the preterite function has acquired a secondary grammaticalized augment in the element *waC-*.

¹² The relevance of *iprus*, (*lam*) *yaf'al*, etc., to the question of the Hebrew *waw*-consecutive has not, however, been universally acknowledged. Indeed, it is disconcerting to see how frequently in the literature the question of the *waw*-consecutive is reduced to pondering the question of why the prefixed form *yiqtol* should have acquired a past meaning in this construction rather than retaining a present/future meaning, without reference to the fact that the underlying **yaqtul-Ø* of the *waw*-consecutive must originally have been an entirely separate morphological entity from the present-future **yaqtul-u*.

¹³ We follow here the general reconstruction of a single form for both of these two functions, rather than assuming an accentual distinction (preterite **yáqtul* vs. jussive **yaqtúl*), as Hetzron (1969) does.

5.3.2 *waC-*

What may be said about the nature of this *waC-*? Various older approaches have seen in *waC-* a concatenation of *wə-* ‘and’ followed by one or another interposed element. The nature of the element in question has been the subject of numerous speculations. In the eighteenth century, Scholze and others proposed that the interposed element was the verb *hăyâ* ‘(he) was,’ making Hebrew *way-yiqtol* (in gross structural terms, but not in functional terms) the counterpart to Arabic *wa-kāna yaqtulu* ‘and he was killing.’¹⁴ Ewald reconstructed a sequence composed of the conjunction and ‘*âz* ‘then, at that time.’ Maag (1953), following Koehler (v. infra), has reconstructed *waC-* as **wan-*, a sequence of *wə-* + an otherwise unknown deictic particle **han-*, to be compared to such particles as *hinne*^h—

... Während des Imperfekt als solches nur die Unabgeschlossenheit des Geschehens visiert, weist *han* auf deren zeitlichen Einsatzpunkt hin, der in der Erzählung meist (!) in der Vergangenheit liegt. **han-jiktoḇ* wäre »da schreibt er«... [Maag 1953: 87].¹⁵

The lexicon of Koehler and Baumgartner (1958), on the other hand, is agnostic about the connection between the conjunction *wə-* and the “Prefix” **wan-*, assigning the latter a separate entry but marking it “zu [*wə*] gehörig?” Other interpreters, however, have completely dismissed the similarity between *wə-* and *waC-* as mere coincidence. G. R. Driver (1936) has drawn an analogy between the Hebrew *wə-/waC-* opposition and the Akkadian distinction between *u* (= Hebrew *wə-*, Arabic *wa-*, etc.) and the enclitic conjunction *-ma*.

... Whether... it is a case of *-ma* having actually become *wa-* through the change, in itself common enough, of *m* into *w*, it is difficult to say; for, since *û-* and *wa-* are originally identical forms serving also as the copula in the various Semitic languages, it is possible also to suggest that the consecutive *wāw* has not arisen out of the Acc. *-ma* ‘indeed’ but is the regular Heb. *û-* or *wa-* ‘and’ vocalized as *wa-* rather than *û-* through the analogy of the Accadian particle... In other words, it is clear that there is some connection between the Accadian and Hebrew particles, even though it is not possible to be certain what the connection precisely is... [Driver 1936: 52]

¹⁴ “... In my opinion, the best theory about the origin of the waw conversive is still that of J. D. Michaelis, long forgotten by Semiticists. Michaelis thought (in 1745) that *waC-* had come from the verbal form **hawaya* ‘it was’...” (Hetzron 1969: 9).

¹⁵ Maag’s analysis is cited with approval by Hughes 1970: 13 fn. 8.

Hebrew *waC-* has also been compared to the Egyptian adverbial particle *iw*, the similarity being interpreted as evidence that *waC-* is to be traced back to ancestral Afro-Asiatic.¹⁶

The final school of thought views *waC-* simply as a historical continuation of the normal conjunction **wa-* which has undergone a secondary differentiation of some sort. Knudtzon proposed that the following *dageš* simply served to enable Hebrew to retain the vowel *a* unreduced.

Die Verdopplung bzw. Verschärfung des folgenden Konsonanten, die im A. T. vorliegt, beweist natürlich nicht, dass man von einem einfachen [*wa*] nicht ausgehen darf; sie wurde eben nach den im massoretischen Text vorliegenden Lautregeln notwendig, um den ursprünglichen kurzen *a*-Laut, der ja zu einem Merkmal der form geworden war, zu erhalten... [Knudtzon 1892: 52 fn. 1]¹⁷

Others have taken the presence of the gemination to be related in some manner to the fact that the verb in the *waw*-consecutive construction frequently displays retraction of the accent—e.g., *way-yó(')kal*, *way-yəḥárek* (cf. Revell 1984: 441). Philippi (1894: 374 fn. ††) concludes that the accent must originally have fallen on the conjunction (“das hier stets verstärkte Bedeutung hatte (= *und da*)”), and the gemination was subsequently introduced once the accent was shifted onto the verb. Revell, in contrast, conjectures that the starting point for the development of *waC-* lay in those verbal types in which the retracted accent would have fallen upon the verb’s first syllable (e.g., **wa-yábnīy-Ø* ‘and he built’). Since the vowel of **wa-* would have regularly been retained without reduction when the conjunction immediately preceded the accented syllable (e.g., **wā-yíben* < **wa-yíbnī*, like *wā-met* < **wa-may(yi)t-*), Revell speculates that the appearance of a formal distinction between normal *wə-* and pretonic **wā-* could have been exploited and expanded as the marker of a special verbal construction.

... This form of the conjunction could then have been transferred to other forms as a distinguishing mark of the otherwise generally unmarked semantic category “*waw* consecutive imperfect.” Since other forms did not have initial stress, the consonant following the conjunction had to be doubled to maintain the length of the syllable... [Revell 1984: 443]

¹⁶ For a critical discussion of the *iw/waC-* connection see Smith 1991: 3-5.

¹⁷ Driver (who, it will be recalled, relates *waC-* to Akkadian *-ma*) states that Knudtzon’s explanation of the gemination, “... as it is in harmony with the Massoretic rules of vocalization, may be accepted as correct.” (Driver 1936: 93)

5.3.3 *waC-* and **l-*

The shape which we find for the first syllable of the Hebrew *waw*-consecutive construction thus continues to give rise to a wide range of opinions. As in the case of the Hebrew article, the gemination in the element *waC-* has led both to interpretations in which it is viewed as evidence for the presence of a lost element (whether that element be Ewald's 'āz, Maag's **-han-*, Scholze's auxiliary verb, or some other entity) and to interpretations which find in it the simple conjunction **wa-* (reshaped by one extrasegmentally motivated reconfiguration or another). On the whole, more recent studies have tended to focus upon the verbal component of the *waw*-consecutive construction rather than upon the *waC-* itself, and have restricted their discussion of the gemination of *waC-* to a decrying of the proliferation of hypothetical entities which over the years have been mustered in order to explain the form of *waC-*. Kustár (1972) writes, "... From this historical survey we can see that already at that time [i.e., the turn of the century] every conceivable, fantastic hypothesis existed, instead of an adequate understanding of the phenomenon..."¹⁸ while Revell notes,

Suggestions that the prefix to *waw* consecutive imperfect verb forms is, or includes, some verbal or adverbial... are to be rejected... If the *waw* is the conjunction, the supposed additional element should be recognizable sometimes when the conjunction is not prefixed, and if the *waw* is not the conjunction, we need an explanation of why clauses with initial *waw* consecutives should be the only group not regularly introduced by a conjunction. [Revell 1984: 443 fn. 25]

Waltke and O'Connor conclude, "... The fact that no theory based on a special origin for *wa(y)-* has gained acceptance suggests that the meaning of the compound construction cannot be decided on this basis..." (1990: 545). Whatever relevance it may or may not have for the theoretical underpinnings of the Hebrew verbal system, however, the element *waC-* merits historical investigation in its own right. Since we have seen above that there is reason to suspect that, in certain instances, the Hebrew sequence *-aC-* is to be traced back to a syllabic **l*, it is worth taking a moment to investigate this new avenue of approach as a potential explanation for the problematical *waC-*.

¹⁸ As cited by Waltke and O'Connor (1990: 545).

As we have seen above (§4.7.2.3), the Hebrew definite article loses its *h-* when it is immediately preceded by a proclitic preposition—i.e., *b-aC-*, *l-aC-*, *k-aC-* ‘in-the-,’ ‘to-the-,’ ‘like-the-’ rather than **bə-haC-*, **lə-haC-*, **kə-haC-*. We have interpreted these data, in historical terms, not as a loss of **h-* but as a failure to introduce a secondary *h-* before what, in the absence of the proclitic, would have been an initial vowel. The view that the *h-* is historically not an intrinsic part of the Hebrew article has enabled us to reconstruct the article as earlier **aC-*, which ultimately may plausibly be traced back to **l-*, which is in turn to be compared to the Arabic article.

Might not a similar chain of developments lie behind the *waC-* of the *waw*-consecutive? We may assume that the early Semitic asseverative **l-* particle could be placed before the apocopated verb-form when it functioned as a preterite predicate (**l-tip'al-Ø* ‘(verily) you did’), just as it clearly could when the *apocopatus* served modal functions (**l-tip'al-Ø* ‘may you do!’). If the regular phonological reflex of Semitic syllabic **l* in Hebrew was **aC-* (> **haC-*), it is a simple matter to connect *waC-* with an earlier **l*-particle simply by following in the footsteps of the various earlier interpretations of *waC-* as an early Hebrew compound consisting of the proclitic conjunction **wa-* in close juncture with some form of adverbial element. In the present view, therefore, the *waw*-consecutive construction was composed (in etymological terms) of a preterite-sense apocopated verb-form to which an asseverative **(h)aC*-particle has been prefixed, with the conjunction **wa-* situated before that—**wa-(h)at-tip'al-Ø* ‘and-verily-(you) did’ > *wat-tip'al*.

Ultimately, therefore, the fact that the verb of the Hebrew *waw*-consecutive construction has a narrative-tense function seems to be due, not to any peculiar influence of the conjunction **wa-*, or even to the complex **wa- + X-*, but simply to the fact that expressing the narrative tense seems to have been one of several functions of the early Semitic apocopated verb-form, from which the verb of the *waw*-consecutive is descended. At the original stage, the particle **l-* in this construction, as in other constructions, would have served merely as an index of “emphasis.” What seems to have been of relevance to the historical role of **l-* in the *waw*-consecutive construction is not meaning but, as we have found elsewhere in the problem of **l-*, syntax and phonology. As is well known, the *waw*-consecutive construction is limited to verb-initial position in the clause, and, as we have seen, the apocopated form of the finite verb typically lacks the final mood-vowel. In both of these respects, the presence of the reconstructed **l*-particle concurs with what we have suggested above concerning the placement of *la-* in early Arabic: in simple clauses, *la-* is prefixed to clause-initial elements ending in a consonant.

| | | | | | | |
|-----------------|-----|----------------------|------------|-----|--------------------|-----------------------------|
| Pre-Hebrew | *l- | [*tip'al] | ... | > | w- | at-tip'al (< *(h)at-tip'al) |
| like Pre-Arabic | *l- | [*qad] | fa'alta... | > | la-qad | fa'alta... |
| | | *l-[*taf'al-an(in)] | ... | > | la-taf'alan(na)... | |
| | | *l- | [*taf'al] | ... | > | li-taf'al... |

In one sense, what has happened to **l-tip'al-Ø* in Hebrew is the mirror image of its fate in Akkadian. In the latter language the reflex of the **l*-particle has become grammaticalized in order to introduce a secondary distinction reflecting the dual function of the apocopated form of the verb. The result of this grammaticalization is a new formal opposition between the unmarked preterite *iprus* and the *l(u)*-prefixed wish/command form *l-iprus*. The emphasizing particle *lu* is still available to the preterite construction, of course, with the preterite *lu* retaining its original optionality—as well as its independent, uncontracted shape.

| | | | | |
|---------|---|---|------|------------------------------------|
| (*l- +) | *iprus-Ø '(verily) he divided' 'may he (verily) divide!' | > | (lu) | iprus '(verily) he divided' |
| | | | | <i>l-iprus</i> 'may he divide!' |

In Hebrew, in contrast, the grammaticalization has affected the preterite manifestation of the apocopated form. While the original, bare *apocopatus* has been retained as a modal form, it has been abandoned as a preterite, having survived in this function only in conjunction with the ancillary particle (w)-aC- (< *(h)aC- < *l-), which has now become an obligatory component in the preterite construction.

| | | | | |
|---------|---|---|-------------------------------|-----------------------|
| (*l- +) | *tahyiy-Ø '(verily) you were' 'may you (verily) be!' | > | w-at-təhî '(and) you were' | |
| | | | | təhî 'may you be!' |

A parallel to this view of the development of the Hebrew system is to be found in the Indo-European languages. Several of the best-documented Indo-European dialect-groups (Indo-Iranian and Armeno-Hellenic) as well, apparently, as Phrygian regularly prefix the reflex of a vowel **e*- (the so-called “augment”) as part of the formation of past-tense (aorist and imperfect) verb-forms—cf., e.g., the imperfect **e-bherom*, **e-bheret* ‘carried’ (1 sg., 3 sg.) > Sanskrit *a-bharam*, *a-bharat*, Avestan *a-barəm*, *a-barat*, Greek *é-phere*, *é-phere*, Armenian (*beri*,) *e-ber*.¹⁹ As prefixation is

¹⁹ The augment has survived in Armenian only in forms which would otherwise have been monosyllabic.

a phenomenon otherwise unknown to early Indo-European morphology, the augment has long been interpreted as an independent particle which has secondarily become incorporated into the structure of the verb. Its secondary nature is made clear by the fact that, in the earlier stages of several of these languages (Mycenean, Homeric, Vedic, etc.), the past-tense verb routinely appears without the augment.

In the older Indo-Iranian languages, however, unaugmented aorist (and, to a lesser extent, unaugmented imperfect) verbs also are found within modal contexts. These so-called “injunctive” forms are most familiar in prohibitive constructions containing *mā*, but they are also found in other modal situations. Cf. examples such as the following, which are from Avestan (Reichelt 1978: 320-323).

huxšaθrā xšēntqm mā nē dušxšaθrā xšēntā (Yasna 48.5) ‘gute Herrscher sollen herrschen (*xšēntqm*: 3 pl. mid. imperative), nicht sollen schlechte Herrscher über uns herrschen (*mā... xšēntā*: 3 pl. mid. (unaugmented imperfect =) injunctive)’
aθā nā θrāzdūm (Yasna 34.7) ‘so schirmt (*θrāzdūm*: 2 pl. mid. (unaugmented aorist =) injunctive) uns denn’

The position of the augment *a-* in early Indo-Iranian thus seems to parallel that of **(h)aC-* (< **l-*) in early Hebrew rather closely: an originally independent particle has come to be incorporated into the verbal morphology as an indicator of (indicative) pastness, thereby introducing a morphological distinction into a verbal paradigm which seems to have originally encompassed both preterite and modal functions.²⁰

5.3.4 Extra-Hebrew parallels

It is not clear to what degree we may assume that cognates to the early Hebrew structure composed of *waC-* + apocopated verb exist in the remaining Northwest Semitic languages. Certainly prefixed-form verbs with an apparent past-tense reference are to be found throughout many of the earlier manifestations of these languages, and such forms are not infrequently attested after the conjunction *w-*. Since the writing systems of these languages reveal little about these forms other than their consonantal skeleton, however, we can only speculate as to whether the important issue

²⁰ See Szemerényi (1980: 278) and the literature cited there for discussion of the original sense of the element **e-*. Cowgill has proposed that “... up until late in the prehistory of Indo-European it was an independent word (meaning roughly ‘really’)...” (1963: 108). If this is correct, the parallels in the semantic developments of Hebrew **(h)aC-* and Indo-Iranian *a-* would be quite striking.

concerning us here—the configuration of the first syllable *waC-* found in Hebrew, which we have suggested points indirectly to the presence of an earlier **l-*particle—also lies behind the graphic shape of these forms.

Outside of Hebrew, possible examples of the *waC-* construction are to be found in Moabite and in the Aramaic of the Zkr, Tell Dan and Deir ‘Alla inscriptions. The construction appears to be absent from Phoenician.

wmlk yšr’l bnh ’t yhš wyšb bh bhlthmh by wygršh kmš mpy w’qh mm’b m’tn ’š kl ršh w’s’h byhš w’hzh (Mš‘ inscr. (= KAI 181) ll. 18-19)
 ‘Und der König von Israel hatte Jahaš gebaut und lagerte (*w-yšb*) darin während seines Feldzuges gegen mich. Da vertrieb ihn (*w-ygrš-h*) Kamoš vor mir und ich holte (*w-’qh*) aus Moab 200 Mann, alle seine *Anführer*. Und ich brachte sie (*w-’š’h*) nach Jahaš und nahm es ein (*w-’hzh-h*).’

w’s’ ydy ’l b’lš[my]n wy’ny b’lšmy[n...] (Zkr inscr. (= KAI 202) l. A, 11)
 ‘Da erhob ich (*w-’š’*) meine Hände zu B’LŠ[MJ]N und B’LŠMJ[N] erhörte mich (*w-y’n-ny*)...’

wyqm b’lm mn mhr[...] (Deir ‘Alla (Hoftijzer and van der Kooij 1976) I-5)
 ‘And Balaam stood up (*w-yqm*) the next morning...’

In all of these languages, including Hebrew, the prefixed-form preterite construction exists alongside the suffixed verb-form (Hebrew *qāṭal-tī* ‘I killed’). In the later manifestations of Aramaic, as in later Hebrew, these suffixed-form preterites have entirely pushed out the prefixed-form preterites (Hebrew *wā-’eqtol*).

Several verbal forms functioned as the narrative, historical past tense in the first millennium NWS dialects. Most dialects—Old Aramaic (Zkr), the Deir Alla dialect, Moabite and Hebrew—used the old consecutive imperfect; this distribution suggests that the consecutive imperfect was a common NWS verb form. In the other dialects, the consecutive imperfect was lost. It was replaced by the perfect in Samalian, most Old Aramaic dialects (post-ninth century), and in late Hebrew (sixth century on). This replacement probably occurred independently in the different dialects... [Garr 1985: 186]

As there is no way of knowing whether the *w-* in these older Northwest Semitic constructions is to be read as the counterpart of Hebrew *waC-* or as the simple conjunction reflecting Semitic **wa-*, the value of these examples for the discussion of **l-* remains uncertain. The fact that, judging by what we find in Akkadian, the early Semitic *apocopatus* itself, even in the absence of the **l-*particle, seems to have been capable of conveying the past tense opens up the theoretical possibility that at least certain of these languages may have maintained a survival of the original function indicated by the Akkadian preterite *iprus* even without the addition of **(h)aC-*. This appears to be the case in Ugaritic, for example, where there is good reason

to believe that apocopated verb-forms were capable of serving as preterites. We find no grounds to suspect that such verbs were bound into a fixed syntagm such as we find in the Hebrew *way-yip'al* (Verreet 1988: 72-74).²¹

w ymġ mlakk 'm dtn lqḥ mtpz (1.124, 10-12) 'Und dein Bote kam (*ymġ*) zu Dtn, um den Urteilsspruch in empfang zu nehmen'²²
kbkbm tm tpl k lbnt (1.13, 13) 'Sternen fielen (*tpl*) dort/dann als Ziegelsteine'

It is worth noting, nevertheless, that in all of the Northwest Semitic languages in question a Semitic syllabic */ ought to have been reflected by a vowel associated with gemination of the following consonant, since these languages all show the irregular paradigm of *√lqh* 'take' which we have ascribed above to this phenomenon. In principle, therefore, we have *a priori* a reason to suspect that, if a descendent of the original */-particle were present in these constructions, it should have assumed much the same shape in these languages that it did in Hebrew *w-aC-*, and consequently would not have been represented in the written form.

Despite the indeterminacy of the Northwest Semitic evidence, we have concrete grounds to suspect that a close association between the */-particle and the preterite sense of the apocopated verb-form is to be traced back to a point quite early in the history of Semitic. The Akkadian syntagm *lu iprus* (i.e., the (uncontracted) asseverative *lu* + the preterite (= apocopated) form) corresponds exactly, in formal terms, to the core */-(h)at-tip'al-Ø which we reconstruct for the Hebrew *waw*-consecutive construction.²³ Cf., e.g., the Old Babylonian *Bagh. Mitt.* 2 58 iii:

| | |
|--|---------------------------------------|
| <i>iš-tu a-na-ku i-du-ú a-na i-na-an-na</i> | ... since I know, to this point, |
| <i>um-ma-na-a-tum ša am-na-an-ja-aḥ-</i> | the troops of Amnān-Jaḥrur twice |
| <i>ru-ur ši-ni-šu</i> | |
| <i>ù ša-la-ši-šu a-na ti-il-lu-ut bi-tim an-</i> | and three times to the aid of this |
| <i>ni-i-im</i> | house |
| <i>lu is-ni-qá-a-nim ...</i> | <i>lu</i> came here... |
| <i>ù 'sà-bi-um šar-ru-um be-el a-li-šu</i> | And Sābi'um the king, the lord of his |
| | city, |

²¹ "Der Gebrauch des ugaritischen Narrativs entspricht völlig dem der amarnaanaanischen Kurzform *yaqtul*, d.h. als Punktual-Präteritum... ein konsekutives Waw aber, wie im Hebräischen und gemäß den Vermutungen von E. Hammershaimb auch im Ugaritischen, spielt offensichtlich gar keine Rolle" (Verreet 1988: 74).

²² The verb *ymġ* shows the apocopated form, the corresponding indicative form being *ymġy*.

²³ "... in royal inscrs. from Assyria from Shalm. I to Asn... often fused with the prefix *u-*, e.g. *lu-qe-li* AOB 1 118 iii 7 (Shalm. I), note *lit-tar-ru-ni* AKA 47 ii 96 (Tigl. I), but *lu it-tar-ru-ni* Weidell Tn. 28 No. 16:85..." (CAD s.v. *lu* (2d)).

qá-du-um l li-mi šābim^{bi-a} lu il-li- kam with one thousand troops *lu* came...

Perhaps a closer parallel to the Hebrew *w-aC*-construction is to be found in Classical Arabic. As is well known, the preterite value of the apocopated verb-form has survived in Arabic only within the negative past constructions—*lam yaf'al-Ø* 'he did not do' and *lammā yaf'al-Ø* 'he has not done.' These syntagms serve as the negative counterparts to the suffixed-tense constructions *fa'al-a* 'he did' and *qad fa'al-a* 'he has done,' respectively (Bergsträsser 1914: 8-14; Reckendorf 1977: 46-47).

rabbi 'innī da'awtu qawmī laylan wa-nahāran fa-lam yazidhum du'ā'ī 'illā firāran (LXXI: 5-6) 'My Lord, verily I have called my people night and day, but my call has not impelled them to anything (*lam yazid-hum*) but flight'

yā zakariyā' 'innā nubašširuka biyulāmin ismuhu yaḥyā lam naj'al lahu min qablu samiyyan (XIX: 7-8) 'O Zakariyā', verily We bring you tidings of a boy named Yaḥyā, whose namesake We have not made (*lam naj'al*) before'

wa-lammā yadxul il-'imānu fī qulūbikum (XXXXIX: 14) '... while belief has not yet entered (*lammā yadxul*) your hearts'

As cognates to *lam* and *lammā* are not attested elsewhere in Semitic, these particles are evidently innovations which developed only within Arabic. The form *lammā* has been taken to consist of the preterite marker *lam*, to which a particle *mā*²⁴ has been attached. The basic *lam* itself is held by Brockelmann to have originally consisted of the familiar negative marker *lā* followed by an earlier **mā*.

Im Arab. ist die alte Negation *lā* im wesentlichen an das älteste Tempus, das Impf., gebunden. Berichtet dies von der Vergangenheit... so wird *lā* durch das hervorhebende *mā* verstärkt, das in der Anlehnung seinen selbständigen Druck und damit seinen Vokal verliert: *lam*. *Lā* allein steht vor dem Impf., wenn es zeitlos oder futurisch zu verstehen ist, sowie vor dem Jussiv... [Brockelmann 1913 (II): 182]

Reckendorf (1967) also reconstructs *lam* as **lā-mā*, but parses the underlying construction differently. Since one of the many functions of *mā* in Arabic is to serve as a subordinating conjunction (the *mā al-mašdariyya* or "*mā* paralleling the function of the verbal noun (*mašdar*)"), Reckendorf

²⁴ Wright takes the *mā* of *lam-mā* to be the *mā al-daymūmiyya*, the "*mā* of temporal extent."

proposes “[*lam*] aus *lā* + *mā* «nicht (ist der Fall,) dass»” (1967: 85). He compares this to the future negative construction *lan yaf'al-a* ‘he will not do’ which is taken to be from **lā* + ‘*an yaf'al-a* ‘that he do.’²⁵

Hetzron (1969) similarly traces *lam* back to **lā* + **mā*, but he compares the **mā* to the negating *mā* of Arabic—cf. *mā fa'ala* ‘he did not do’ = *lam yaf'al*. Hetzron believed that *mā* served originally to negate nominal constructions, and was introduced into the verbal system once the (originally nominal) *fa'ala*-construction was incorporated into the verbal system.²⁶ *Lam* (< **lā-mā*) thus constitutes a concatenation of the original verbal negator **lā* (**lā yaf'al* ‘he did not do’²⁷) and the negative *mā* of the new past (*mā fa'ala*).

The correlation which Hetzron draws between the appearance in Arabic of the negating element *lam* and the presence of the negating particle *mā*, which likewise appears only in Arabic, is an appealing notion. As long as we ascribe the negating effect of *lam* to the original presence of the negating *mā*, however, there is no need to see in the *la-* of *lam* a remnant of the negative *lā*.²⁸ It is consequently not to be ruled out that this *la-* may be, like the asseverative *la-* itself, a survival of the original asseverative **l-* particle—**l-mā* > **la-mā* > *lam*.²⁹ The first step in this development, the appearance of **la-* to replace the earlier **l-* (or rather, syllabic **l-*), parallels what we have seen above in the discussion of the history of the particle *la-*. In the second step, the loss of the final **-ā*, we are merely following the lead of previous researchers who have seen in *lam* a trace of an earlier **-mā*, whether that **-mā* is felt to have originally been a negator, a complementizer, or simply a marker of “Hervorhebung”—in any case, the phonological development itself is paralleled by the development of Arabic *kam* ‘how much?’ < **ka-mā* ‘like-what?’ and *bim* ‘why?’ alongside *bimā* (Reckendorf 1967: 74, 85).

If this interpretation of *lam* is correct, we find that conspicuously analogous developments seem to have taken place within the histories of

²⁵ “... In spite of his footnote, *mā* does not have the same functions as the conjunctive particle *an*. On the other hand, there is no reason to use a conjunction before a perfect” (Hetzron 1969: 20 fn. 2).

²⁶ Like many other researchers, Hetzron takes the West Semitic past/perfective tense *fa'ala* to be the cognate to the Akkadian stative construction *paris* ‘(he is/was) divided,’ in which person-marking is likewise accomplished through suffixation.

²⁷ Hetzron (1969) maintains that there was originally a distinction in accent between the preterite (**yāp'al*) and jussive (**yap'al*) functions of the apocopated verb-form.

²⁸ Analyses interpreting *lam* as *lā* + *mā* face an additional complication in that all of the other instances of the loss of final **-ā* of which I am aware contain a short vowel in the initial syllable—*ka-mā*, *bi-mā*, etc. (v. infra).

²⁹ Hetzron (1969: 20 fn. 2) observes that Grimme analyzed *lam* as *la-mā* in 1896.

Biblical Hebrew and Literary Arabic. In the case of both languages, the original Semitic apocopated verb-form **tip'al-Ø* seems to have only survived in its preterite manifestation through the mediation of the **l-* particle, which seems to have become grammaticalized into a new, specifically preterite "**l- + apocopatus*" syntagm in the ancestor of these languages. Likewise, in each of these two languages the new **l-tip'al-Ø* syntagm has only survived through a further step of grammaticalization involving a second element—the conjunction in Hebrew and the negative *mā* in Arabic.

Table 33: **l-* and the *apocopatus* in Hebrew and Arabic

| | | |
|-----|--|---|
| I | <i>*tip'al-Ø</i> 'you did'/'may you do!' ~ <i>*l- + *tip'al-Ø</i> 'you truly did'/'may you truly do!' | |
| | | |
| II | <i>*tip'al-Ø</i> 'may you do!' ≠ | <i>*l- + *tip'al-Ø</i> 'you did' (= <i>*pa'al-ta</i> 'you did') |
| III | ↓ | Hebrew Arabic |
| | | <i>*wa- + *l- + *tip'al-Ø</i> <i>*l- + *mā + *tif'al-Ø</i> 'and you did' 'you did not do' |
| IV | Hebrew <i>tip'al</i> Arabic (<i>li-</i>) <i>taf'al</i> ³⁰ | <i>wat-tip'al</i> <i>lam taf'al</i> '(and) you did' 'you did not do' |

In principle, the objection might be raised that Arabic *la-* does not occur in negative sentences, and the negative construction **la-mā tif'al-Ø* which we have taken to underlie *lam taf'al* would therefore be unexpected. It should be borne in mind that, since the negative meaning of *mā* is in all likelihood historically secondary, there is no reason that the basic building blocks of the construction, **l-* and **mā*, should have been intrinsically incompatible at an earlier stage of the language. Once the *mā* acquired its secondary negating sense, it presumably became involved in a complex series of syntactic restructurings as it shifted from its original role (presumably as a pronominal) to the role of a negator.

I suspect that, if *lam* has indeed arisen from **la-mā*, we find in this construction an indirect indication of some of the shifts which must have befallen *mā* over its history. If we are correct in taking *la-* (< **l-*) at the

³⁰ Reflexes of the **l-* particle thus seem to have become grammaticalized into the Arabic verbal system at two separate points in history, and in two separate functions. The first such development, the formation of a preterite construction composed of **l- + apocopatus*, must have occurred quite early, if we are correct in comparing it with the development seen in Hebrew. The second grammaticalization, the incorporation of the particle *l(i)-* as an integral component of the jussive formation, in contrast had still not been completed at the time of the earliest poetry, since, as we have seen, at that point the bare *apocopatus* form *taf'al-Ø* could still be used to express wishes or commands.

earlier stages of Arabic to have been associated primarily with clause-initial elements ending in a consonant, we may relate its appearance in the *lam taf'al-Ø* construction to the presence of the apocopated form of the verb in clause-initial position—this, it will be noted, is in close agreement with what we find in the Hebrew *waw*-consecutive *w-at-tip'al*, which is limited to clause-initial position, its function outside of that position being filled by the suffixed-form *pā'áltā*. Consequently, there should originally have been no negative counterpart to the pre-Arabic **la-taf'al-Ø* preterite in which a negating element such as **lā*, **mā*, etc., preceded the verb. All of this suggests that the negative **la-mā taf'al-Ø*, in which **la-* was prefixed to the vowel-final **mā*, could only have arisen secondarily, as a new creation from **la-taf'al-Ø* on the model of *mā fa'ala*, *mā yaf'al-u*, etc.³¹

| | Negative <i>*mā</i> | | <i>*mā</i> generalized | Attested Arabic |
|--------------------|--|--|--|--|
| 'he did' | <i>*fa'alta ~</i> <i>*la-tif'al-Ø</i> | <i>*fa'alta ~</i> <i>*la-tif'al-Ø</i> | <i>*fa'alta ~</i> <i>*la-tif'al-Ø</i> | <i>fa'alta</i> |
| 'he did not do' | <i>*lā fa'alta</i> | <i>*mā fa'alta</i> | <i>*mā fa'alta ~</i> <i>*la-mā tif'al-Ø</i> | <i>mā fa'alta ~</i> <i>lam taf'al-Ø</i> |

A complete account for the problem of *lam* is impossible, of course, until a full explanation for the development of the negative *mā* of Arabic is available.

5.4 The article and the vocative of Hebrew and Ugaritic

One final aspect of Hebrew which is of potential relevance to the question of the Semitic **l-* is the use of the definite article *haC-* as a marker of the vocative (Waltke and O'Connor 1990: 247).

way-yiqrā' 'ahārē-šā'ûl le(')mor 'āḏonî ham-me'lek (1 Samuel 24: 9) 'And he called to Saul, "My Lord, O King (*ham-me'lek*)" ...'

ben-mî 'attâ han-ná'ar (1 Samuel 17: 58) 'Whose son are you, young man (*han-ná'ar*)?'

hab-bá'al 'ānenû (I Kings 18: 26) 'O Ba'al (*hab-bá'al*), answer us'

It is fairly clear that this *haC-* is to be regarded etymologically as a manifestation of the definite article rather than as an unrelated homophonous particle, since the vocative *haC-* occurs only with nouns capable of taking the article and is absent from, e.g., proper names—e.g.,

³¹ Note that there is no negative counterpart to the Hebrew *waw*-consecutive, the corresponding negative to *way-yiqtol* being provided by *lo(') qāṭal* even in clause-initial position.

there is no **haš-šəlomô* ‘*O Solomon.’ It is also typically absent when the addressee is indefinite or non-specific.

lek-’el-namālā ‘āšel (Proverbs 6: 6) ‘Go to the ant, O sluggard (*‘āšel*)’
šəmaḥ bāḥūr bəyaldūte’kā (Ecclesiastes 11: 9) ‘Be happy, young man (*bāḥūr*), when you are young’

Huehnergard (1983: 579, 581, 584) observes that vocative *l*-particles seem to be found in Amorite, Tigre, and Ugaritic.³² We have suggested above (§4.7.1), however, that the Amorite forms in question—proper names composed of a noun preceded by a *la*-element (e.g., *la-a-mu-ri-im* (gen.) ‘O (god) Amurru!’)—may alternatively be parsed as noun phrases containing manifestations of a “proto-article” **/V-* < **/l-*, and it is not clear that the Tigre evidence reflects an element distinct from the definite article.³³

There is no question, however, that a prefixed <*l*> was used in Ugaritic as a vocative marker, and was in fact “die weit am häufigsten belegte Partikel dieser Art des Ugaritischen” (Aartun 1974: 38-39).

l / n'mn ilm ḥtn / m b'l trḥ pdry b[t ár] (77:24-26) ‘o Liebling des Il, o Schwiegersohn des Ba'l, heirate Pdry, die To[chter des Lichtes]!’
mḥ / tāršn lbtlt 'nt (49: II:13-14) ‘was wünschst du, o Jungfrau ‘Anat?’
šm' m' / lbn ilm mt (49: IV:23-24) ‘höre, o Sohn des Il, Mt!’

If it is indeed true that the Hebrew vocative *haC-* is a subcategory of the article *haC-*, we may consequently find in the Ugaritic vocative *l-* further support for viewing the Hebrew article as the descendant of an early Semitic **l*-particle. If we conjecture that the Ugaritic vocative *l-* reflects a development of the proto-**l-* into a marker characterized by this specific

³² Huehnergard may well be correct in omitting Arabic from the list of languages providing evidence for a vocative *l*-particle. The *la-* of *yāla* (*zaydin*) ‘(help me,) O Zayd!’ (known as the *lām al-istiṭāḥ* or “*l* of seeking aid”), which is frequently cited as a parallel to the Ugaritic vocative *l-*, assigns the genitive case to the noun which follows it, thereby differing significantly from the “emphatic” *la-*. Its case-governing properties make the *lām al-istiṭāḥ* look more like an anomalously-voweled form of the preposition *li-* (Huehnergard 1983: 579 fn. 79), particularly since it takes the vowel *-i-* when not preceded by the interjection *yā—yā la-zaydin wa-li-‘amrin* ‘(help me,) O Zayd and ‘Amr!’ Moreover, the traditional Kufan interpretation, which views *yāla-* as a contraction of the battle-cry *yā ‘āla* (*Zaydin*) ‘O folk of (Zayd)!’ cannot be ruled out (Reckendorf 1967: 196-197). Nevertheless, the theoretical possibility that this *la-* is a distinct particle, and that it is to be related to the asseverative *la-* in some manner, remains.

³³ Concerning Phoenician, Segert remarks, “An interjection written [<*l*>]... is perhaps represented in the incantation K[Al] 27... [<*l*’pt’>] ‘O Flying one’, and [<*wl.hnqt*>] ‘and o, the Strangling one’, cf. also line 19. (But the [<*l*>] in these instances may be interpreted also as preposition ‘to’...)” (Segert 1976: 167).

function, we may ascribe the appearance of *haC-* with this same vocative function in Hebrew to the same development.

| | Ugaritic | Hebrew | Arabic |
|------------------|-----------------|-------------------------|--|
| Definite article | ? ³⁴ | (<i>h</i>) <i>aC-</i> | (<i>a</i>) <i>l-/</i> (<i>a</i>) <i>C-</i> |
| Vocative marker | <i>l-</i> | <i>haC-</i> | [<i>la- ?</i>] |

5.5 Conclusion

The primary goal of the present chapter has been to demonstrate that there are grounds to suspect that a derivation of the Hebrew article *haC-* from the Semitic **l-* particle is supported, to one degree or another, by further data within Biblical Hebrew. It is plausible to conjecture that the ancestor of Biblical Hebrew employed the original **l-* particle in a manner roughly comparable to what we may reconstruct for the ancestor of Arabic: **l-* served as an “emphasizer” introduced into sentences of many different types. It is quite likely that we still find survivals of this original emphasizing function in the biblical text, if Croatto is correct in claiming the existence of a “*hē emphaticum*” in Hebrew. More frequently in Hebrew (as in Arabic), however, remnants of the proto-**l-* are to be sought in constructions in which reflexes of the **l-* were employed to bolster distinctions of other sorts within the system, and indeed in certain cases it has come to be the primary instantiation of those distinctions. In addition to the formal realization of the distinction between definite and indefinite within the noun phrase—which has come to be reflected through the presence vs. absence of the article (*hak-kēlēb*, *al-kalb-u* vs. *kēlēb*, *kalb-un*)—such cases include the distinction between the preterite and the modal manifestations of the original Semitic *apocopatus* form—a distinction which, in both Hebrew and Arabic, has come to reside in the obligatory presence of the reflex of **l-* with the preterite *apocopatus* (*w-ay-yāhî*, *la-m yakun*) as opposed to its absence or facultative occurrence with the jussive (*yāhî*, (*li-*)*yakun*).³⁵

³⁴ See §4.7.1. above for the possibility of relating the West Semitic definite article to Aartun’s observation that the particle *l-* of Ugaritic was used “zur Affirmation des nominalen Ausdrucks, des Nomens (des Substantivs; vereinzelt des Adjektivs)” (Aartun 1974: 33).

³⁵ As we have seen above, a trace of this optional **l-* in conjunction with the Hebrew jussive is perhaps to be seen in Ezekiel’s *ha-tiṣpoṭ* < **hat-tiṣpoṭ* < **l-tVθpuṭ-Ø*.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSION

In the preceding chapters, we have examined a series of phonological correspondences which are not readily amenable to the sound laws hitherto proposed for the Semitic languages. As the starting point for these correspondences we have taken the constellation of *l*-particles—occurring either in “emphatic” constructions or in constructions which, it is suggested, have developed secondarily therefrom—which recur throughout these languages but which, in a number of respects, defy a simple reconstruction. We find a considerable amount of variation across the Semitic languages as regards the vowel associated with these particles (Arabic *la-* vs. Arabic *li-* vs. Akkadian *lu* vs. Gə‘əz *la-*, etc.). No less significantly, however, we find variation across the languages simply with respect to the presence vs. absence of a vowel—cf. the vowelless (*wa*)-*l*-*yaqtul* of Arabic and *l*-*iprus* of Akkadian.

None of the three short vowels (**a*, **i*, **u*) which have been reconstructed for early Semitic accounts for the peculiar set of correspondences which we find attested in the *l*-particles. In theory it might be possible to posit a fourth vowel phoneme (“**V_x*”) for early Semitic which is reflected as *-a-* or *-i-* in Arabic, as *-a-* in Gə‘əz, and as *-u-* in Akkadian. Such a hypothetical vowel would have the drawback, however, of having had a profoundly restricted distribution, being limited, to all appearances, to the asseverative/precativ particle **IV_x*- and to the negative *’*V_x**l*. In the case of both etyma the question of the vowel “**V_x*” may not be isolated from the presence of the adjacent **l*, rendering it most unlikely that this “**V_x*” could be considered a discrete, independent element in the sound system of the language.

Interplay in vowel quality is, of course, very familiar throughout the Semitic languages—as trivial examples from Arabic we may cite the alternation *-u-* ~ *-a-* ~ *-i-* seen in the final syllable of *rajul-un*, *rajul-an*, *rajul-in* ‘man’ (in the nominative, accusative, and genitive cases, respectively), or the opposition of *qatal-a* ‘he killed’ vs. *qutil-a* ‘he was killed.’ In principle one might therefore be tempted to speculate that the indeterminacy of the vowel of the **l*-particle is to be subsumed under the set of such vowel substitutions, by assuming that there must originally have been some form of vocalic ablaut in the early Semitic **l*-particle (i.e., **la-* ~ **lu-* ~ **li-*), and that no single language has preserved the full original range of this alternation. Such vowel alternations in Semitic,

however, are invariably associated with definable morphological correlations (e.g., in the examples above, case and voice), and a vowel pattern involving an alternation such as **la-* ~ **lu-* ~ **li-* would be quite unfamiliar *vis-à-vis* the remaining Semitic particles.

We are therefore not entitled to interpret the peculiar indeterminacy of the vocalism of the *l*-particle as the regular descendant of any of the three established vowels. At the same time, it runs counter to our understanding of the nature of the Semitic particles to suggest that there existed a vocalic alternation in the early ancestor of the *l*-particles to which we might ascribe the indeterminacy visible in the documented languages.

The present investigation has suggested that the key to understanding these curious phonological phenomena lies in the fact that the *l*-particles containing the troublesome vowels (*la-*, *li-*, *lu*) are documented alongside forms lacking any vowel whatsoever (*l-*). In light of such forms, it behooves us to wonder whether in fact the ancestral *l*-particle is to be reconstructed with any vowel at all, or whether on the contrary the multiplicity of vowels documented among the attested *l*-particles might have resulted from independent, historically secondary intrusions.

Such a question might well have hitherto seemed pointless, in light of the long-standing assumption that the structure of Proto-Semitic, like that of the most familiar ancient Semitic languages (Hebrew, Akkadian, Arabic, and Aramaic), allowed for only a very limited set of syllabic configurations (**CV*, **CVC*). This fact has rendered it difficult to imagine how an element consisting solely of a prefixed **l-* could have existed in the language. Nonetheless, while these syllabic restrictions may be very valuable as characterizations of the synchronic structure of these historical languages, it is difficult to assume them automatically for the ancestral language. Forms such as the various Semitic words for 'son'—e.g., Hebrew *ben*, Punic βυν, Aramaic *bar*, Amorite *bunu*, and Arabic (*'i*)*bn-u(n)*—all conform to the permitted syllabic patterns, yet nonetheless display very different syllabic structures (Arabic (CV)CC-V(C) vs. CVC- elsewhere). Under the circumstances, it seems wisest to reconstruct the Proto-Semitic word for 'son' as **bn-um* (Steiner 1982: 195; Testen 1985), with a **CC*-cluster (i.e., as a form comparable to that underlying Arabic *ibn-un*, the *i*- of which is the secondary *hamzat al-waṣl*) and with the various unorthodox phonological developments among the CVC-shapes (Aramaic *r* < **n*, the vowel of Hebrew *ben* vs. that of Punic βυν) reflecting the treatments of such clusters in the histories of the various languages. The various reflexes of Semitic 'son' and words like it can only be understood if we assume that

the ancestral language enjoyed more freedom, in terms of the concatenation of consonants allowed, than did its descendants.¹

It has consequently been hypothesized in the present investigation that the reason for the restriction of the anomalous vowel correspondence under consideration here (Akkadian *-u-* = Arabic *-a-*, etc.) to the environment of **l* is to be sought in the sonorant nature of **l*. In the absence of an adjacent vowel, it is suggested, the Proto-Semitic **l* acquired syllabicity, and the resulting syllabic allophone **l̥* is reflected in the *lu*, *la-*, etc., seen in the various documented languages.

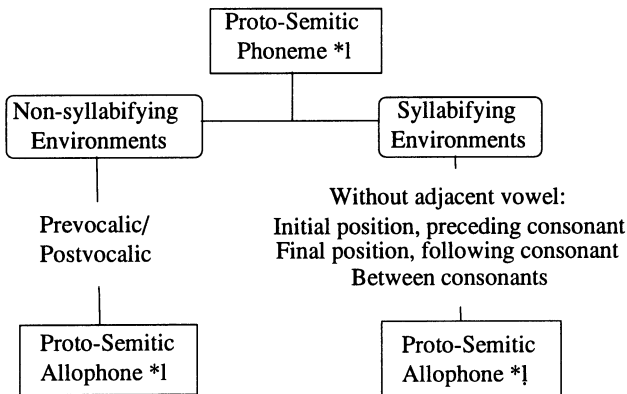


Table 34: Allophones of **l* in Proto-Semitic

In contrast to the familiar consonantal manifestation of early Semitic **l*—cf., e.g., Semitic **kalb-* ‘dog’ > Akkadian *kalb-*, Arabic *kalb-*, Hebrew *kéleb*, etc.—the syllabified manifestation **l̥* has assumed different shapes in the various Semitic languages. Over the course of the preceding chapters it has been suggested that the proposed Semitic **l̥* underwent the following developments during the evolution of the documented languages.

(1) The development of **l̥* in East Semitic (Akkadian) (§3.4.2): Akkadian is distinguished from the remaining Semitic languages in that the outcome of the syllabified **l̥* is associated with the vowel *u*. Among reflexes of the asseverative-precative particle we find this development attested in the shape assumed by “Beteuerungspartikel” *lu* (e.g., *lu* (< **l̥*) in *lu illikam* ‘he (indeed) came’), in the *lu* found in non-verbal precative

¹ The *-r* of Aramaic *bar* serves as confirming evidence for the reconstruction **bn-um*, in that *r* seems to be the regular Aramaic reflex of Semitic **n* in original word-initial **Cn*-clusters—**bn-* > **br-* > *bar-*. Compare also Aramaic *tarên* ‘two’ masc. < **θn-ay-* (cf. Arabic *(i)θnayni* (oblique) vs. Hebrew *šādayim*) (Testen 1985).

constructions (*lu a-wi-lá-tí-ma* ‘may you be a man’), and in the precativ *lu* preceding verbs beginning with a consonant (Assyrian *lu taprus* ‘may she divide,’ *lu niprus* ‘let us divide’). If we are correct in assigning the reconstruction **l̥* to the Semitic negative particle, Akkadian *ul* provides a further instance of the appearance of a secondary *u* in association with the Akkadian reflex of syllabic **l̥*.

We may presume that the resolution of **l̥* into *lu* took place comparatively late in the prehistory of Akkadian, since it evidently occurred after the loss of the glottal stop marking the first-person singular in the precativ paradigm—**l̥-aprus* > **l̥(ʾ)aprus* > Assyrian *l-aprus* (rather than **luaprus* < **lu-(ʾ)aprus*). This implies that the syllabicity of **l̥* was still environmentally conditioned at the time of the loss of **ʾ* (Testen 1993b: 7 fn. 4). In addition to the **l̥*- of the first-person singular, the ancestor of the Akkadian precativ paradigm also contained non-syllabic **l̥*- in conjunction with third-person forms in *i*- (*l-iprus* ‘may he divide,’ *l-iprusū* ‘may they (m.) divide,’ *l-iprusā* ‘may they (f.) divide’). In the case of the forms in *l-i*-, however, it is proposed here that we trace the lack of syllabicity back to ancestral Semitic, at which time the person-prefix was simply **y*- (rather than the **ya*- or **yi*- which has traditionally been reconstructed) (Testen 1994b). When preceded by the particle **l̥*- this **y*- itself became syllabified, rendering syllabification of the **l̥*- unnecessary—i.e., **l̥*- + **[y-prus-]* → **l̥-i-prus-* > Akkadian *l-iprus*, but **l̥*- + **[t-prus-]* → **l̥-tʰ-prus-* > Akk. *lu taprus*.²

It seems likely, finally, that, in the ancestor of the Babylonian dialect at least, the original syllabic **l̥* was assimilated to a following **n*-. This ultimately seems to be the source of the otherwise inexplicable *i* of Babylonian *i niprus* ‘let us divide’—i.e., *i niprus* < **n̥-niprus* < **l̥-niprus*, with the same development of *i* < **n̥* as that seen, e.g., in Akkadian *idin* ‘give (m. sg.)!’ < **ndin* (§3.4.3; Testen 1993b).

(2) The development of **l̥* in Arabic: In contrast to Akkadian, the Arabic reflexes of Semitic **l̥* are characterized by (a) the presence of a vowel *a* rather than *u* in the outcome of syllabic **l̥*, and (b) residual alternations reflecting an original sensitivity to the syllabicity of the preceding environment rather than of the following environment—i.e., the

² For Proto-Semitic derived verbs containing a preradical **-u-* (Testen 1994b), in which the person-prefix **y*- presumably would have remained consonantal, it might therefore be conjectured that the precativ particle **l̥*- would have become syllabic instead—**l̥*- + **[y-uparris-]*, **l̥*- + **[y-ušapris-]* → **l̥-yuparris-*, **l̥-yušapris-*. The corresponding Assyrian precativ forms (*lu parris-*, *lu šapris-*) might thus be considered the result of the regular development of **l̥* > *lu* and the subsequent contraction of **-uyu-* > *-ū-*, depending upon the time at which **yu-* became *u-* in Akkadian.

reflex of the non-syllabified manifestation of the particle **l-* is associated with the presence of a preceding vowel (*wa-l-yaktub* ‘and may he write,’ *wa-l-bint-u* ‘and the girl’ nom.). The existence of sandhi-variants of **l-* is in agreement with Arabic’s phonotactics, which are (in this respect, at least) more conservative than those of the other documented Semitic languages, which have either largely or entirely lost the capacity for showing word-initial consonant clusters and no longer show a systematic alternation dependent upon the preceding environment. In addition to reflexes of a non-syllabic *l-* conditioned by a preceding vowel (as in the examples above), it is possible that a remnant in Arabic of the non-syllabic **l-* in prevocalic position is also to be seen in the *li-* of the *lām al-ʿamr* (*li-yaktub* ‘may he write’), assuming that the latter is to be traced back to the same source as the Akkadian *l-iprus*—i.e., that *li-yaktub* (< an earlier **l-iktub* ult. < **l-* + **[y-ktub-]*) has been reconfigured on the model of the **l-less yaktub-*.

This interpretation of the *l*-particles of Arabic has allowed us to reexamine Barth’s contention that the Arabic definite article is to be related to the “emphatic” particle *la-*. Although Barth’s theory is phonologically untenable as it was originally stated, a fruitful comparison of *(a)l-/ (a)C-* with *la-* becomes quite plausible once we reconstruct the latter as simple **l-*. Chapter Four contains a discussion of the possibility of explaining the shift in function which such a comparison would entail—i.e., the shift from status-marker to definiteness-marker—suggesting that this development might have been motivated by the discourse-pragmatic dynamics underlying Arabic (and, to all appearances, early Semitic) sentential word order.

(3) The development of **l* in Canaanite: The discussion of the Arabic article has provided an incentive to reexamine the long-standing question of the relationship between the definite article of Arabic (*(a)l-/ (a)C-*) and that of the Canaanite and Aramaic languages of the Northwest Semitic group (Hebrew *(h)aC-*, Phoenician *(h)-*, Moabite *h-*, and, perhaps, Aramaic *-ā*). Since the simplest interpretation of the Arabic article—which was also the interpretation of a majority of the medieval grammarians—is to take the basic form of the article to be vowelless *l-* (with a prefixed *a-* added in the absence of a preceding contextual vowel), it is worth using this as the starting point in any hypothesis relating *(a)l-/ (a)C-* to Hebrew *(h)aC-* and its kin. The possibility is suggested in the present investigation that the Canaanite definite article *(h)aC-*, and quite possibly the *-ā* of Aramaic, may represent the *lautgesetzlich* reflex of syllabic **l* in the Northwest Semitic languages. This hypothesis receives a measure of confirmation when we compare the form of the article in these languages with the inflection of the irregular verb **laqaḥ-* ‘take,’ for which we also have grounds to reconstruct

a syllabic **l* (i.e., Hebrew *'eqqaḥ* < **'aqqaḥ* < **'lqaḥ* < **'-* + **-lqaḥ*-) (§4.7.2.4).

It is therefore suggested that **l* in the ancestor of Canaanite, Aramaic, and Ugaritic underwent a shift to **-aC-* (where “C” = the following consonant).³ When this *aC-* was preceded by a word boundary, early Canaanite inserted an **h-* before the **a*, which would otherwise have been in word-initial position (hence Hebrew *ham-mélek* ‘the-king’ < **am-malk-* < **l-malk-*); in the absence of such a boundary (e.g., when the article was preceded by a proclitic preposition) the **h-* was unnecessary and thus was not introduced (*l-am-mélek* ‘to-the-king’ rather than **lā-ham-mélek*). If Lambdin’s view of the Phoenician data, as reinterpreted above (§4.7.2.5), the early Phoenician article showed the same introduction of a secondary *h-*, but, rather than occurring across the board, the *h-* was omitted in the case of words linked in “close juncture.” The article consequently frequently remained unexpressed by the consonantal script (e.g., Phoenician *w'm z* ‘and this people’ (= *w-a'-amm az-zV* ‘and-the-people the-this’) vs. Hebrew *wā-hā-'am haz-zēḥ*).

If (*h*)*aC-* is the regular reflex of **l-* in Hebrew, it is difficult to accept the claim (made originally by Haupt) that a Biblical Hebrew cognate to the Arabic particle *la-* is to be seen in a number of problematical passages featuring a *lamed* (or even <l'> or <lw>) which cannot easily be reconciled with the known grammar of Hebrew. While it is granted that such passages exist, it is worth reserving judgment upon them, rather than adducing them hastily into discussions of *la-* and *lu*. This skepticism is all the more appropriate in light of Croatto’s contention that the Bible contains “emphatic” instances of *ha(C)-* (i.e., of what we would anticipate as the regular Hebrew reflex of the cognate to the “emphatic” *l*-particles). At the same time, it appears entirely possible that a reflex of the Semitic particle **l-* survives embedded in the so-called “*waw*-consecutive” syntagm of Biblical Hebrew (e.g., *way-yikṭob* ‘(and) he wrote’), if we are justified in viewing this construction as having developed from an earlier “**wa-* + **(h)aC-* + verb,” the last two elements of which are to be traced back ultimately to “**l-* + verb” (§5.3.3); this construction may well share its origin with the Arabic negative construction *lam yaktub* ‘he did not write,’ assuming that the latter is from **l-mā yaktub* (§5.3.4).

³ In the absence of a following consonant, **l* appears to have yielded *-al*, if we may judge on the basis of the negative particle **'l* (> Hebrew *'al*, Ugaritic *al*, early Aramaic *'l*). It remains unclear how we are to analyze the prefixed *l-* which we find in Ugaritic. Either word-initial **l-* developed differently in Ugaritic from the word-internal **l* of *√lqh-*, or in some manner the Ugaritic particle reflects the non-syllabic manifestation of Semitic **l-*.

(4) The development of **l* in Aramaic: We have seen that the attestation of the **l*-particle in early Aramaic is oddly skewed in that it is restricted to preverbal position, and even there it is limited to co-occurrence with those verbal forms for which we expect the person-prefix **y*-. Previous investigators have assumed that the verbal prefix *IV*- has resulted from the contraction of **IV*-*yV*-, despite the fact that the loss of **y*- under the influence of a preceding clitic is not a regular phenomenon in Aramaic. It has been suggested in the present study that the **l-i*- which we find in such Aramaic forms is actually the original formation, representing the prefixing of a vowelless **l*- to a vowelless person-marker **y*- (e.g., **l-i-ktub*, 'may he write,' *l-i-šma* 'may he hear'—cf. Akkadian *l-iprus*).

It therefore seems that, of the Semitic **l*-particle, only reflexes of the original non-syllabic (prevocalic) manifestation have survived into Aramaic. Since the conjugation of the verb **laqah*- in Aramaic shows the same "irregular" development as its Canaanite and Ugaritic cognates, we may suppose that in Aramaic, too, Semitic **l* was reflected by **aC*, but that, in Aramaic, this **aC* has come to be lost in initial position (**l-i^vktub* 'may she write' > **at-taktub* > early Aramaic **taktub*).

The loss of initial **aC*- may provide an indirect explanation for the shape assumed by the Aramaic definite article, postposed -*ā*. If we posit that, in pre-Aramaic, words in "close juncture" were protected from the deletion of **aC*- (just as, in early Phoenician, they were protected from the insertion of *h*-), early Aramaic multi-word noun phrases containing what remained of the article (e.g., *'*anθat-a ḥakīmat-a šappīrat* 'woman-the wise-the beautiful' < **a*-'*anθat aḥ-ḥakīmat aš-šappīrat*) could have served as the starting point for the development of what we ultimately find in historical Aramaic (e.g., Syriac '*a(n)tāt-ā ḥakīmāt-ā šappīrāt-ā*).

(5) The development of **l* in Southwest Semitic: Various languages from the cluster of Semitic languages constituting the Southwest Semitic branch (the Ethiopic, Modern South Arabian, and, to a more limited degree, Epigraphic South Arabian groups) have also contributed to the present study. We evidently find in the Gə'əz precative particle *la*- a reflex of Semitic **l*-, and we may presume that the corresponding *lä*- of Tigre (serving as a definite article and as a relative clause marker) goes back to the same origin.

All trace of the non-syllabic (= prevocalic) **l*- which survives in Akkadian (*l-iprus*) and early Aramaic (*ltgmrw*) has been lost in Gə'əz, but it has survived elsewhere among the Southwest Semitic languages—cf. the third-person subjunctive of Tigre (*ləfgär* 3 m. sg.) and of Socotri (*lik'ber* 3 m. sg.); Sabaean forms such as *lhḏrnn* 'may (they) beware' are perhaps also to be reconstructed with **l-i*-. It remains unclear how best to view first-person singular subjunctive forms (e.g., Amharic *l-əsbär*, Mehri

l-ərke:z), as well as other forms in which the person-marking consonant has been lost (e.g., Jibbali *l-éǧəlt* 3 f. sg., with the loss of **t-*): does the *l-* here represent a survival of the syllabic **l-* which has not survived elsewhere (**l-'VktVb > *lV-(')VktVb > lVktVb*), or do we find here the effects of a desyllabification subsequent to the loss of the consonant (**l-'VktVb > *l-VktVb > lVktVb*), such as may have taken place in pre-Akkadian (cf. Assyrian *l-aprus*, if *< *l-(')aprus*)?

In certain of the Southwest Semitic languages we find evidence suggesting that Semitic **l* became **aC-* in a manner quite similar to what has been discussed above for the Northwest Semitic languages. It is possible, for example, that the definite article of the Modern South Arabian languages (e.g., Mehri *ħ(a)-/h(a)-*, Jibbali *ε-*), like the articles of Arabic, Hebrew, and Tigre, may be reconstructed as **l-*; perhaps forms of the article in certain of the dialects of Yemen, consisting of a syllable *aC-* or *iC-*, have preserved a memory of an early form of the MSA article. The irregular assimilation of *l* which we appear to see in certain of the Ethiopic reflexes of the negating particle (Gə'əz *'ak-ko*, Amharic *at(tə)säbräm < *l-X*) is perhaps an indication of the regular reflex of syllabic **l* in at least certain of the Southwest Semitic languages.

The notion that syllabicity has played a role in the development of the Semitic sonorants is not a new one. Diakonoff (1970; 1988) has proposed that we reconstruct syllabified variants of the proto-elements **y*, **w*, **l*, **m*, **n*, **r*, and even the laryngeal **H* (i.e., Semitic **'*). This conclusion was reached on the basis of evidence very different from that expressed in the preceding chapters of the present study, however. Diakonoff has stated that, among Semitic primary (non-derived) nouns, stems of the shape **C₁VC₂C₃-* seem to be systematically excluded unless (a) either **C₂* or **C₃* belonged to the class of elements identified above (**y*, **w*, **l*, **m*, **n*, **r*, **'*), and (b) if it is **C₂* that was of this class, the preceding vowel (V) was **a*. He concluded that such **C₁aSC₃-* stems (where S = a member of the set of "sonants") are to be traced back to forms which originally contained no vowel but for which the sonant served as the syllabic heart of the stem, in a system quite similar to that reconstructed for Indo-European. The outcome of each of the original syllabic sonants (**S*) in the Pre-Semitic ancestral language, in Diakonoff's opinion, was early Semitic **-aS-*.

| | |
|--|---|
| Semitic * <i>kalb</i> - 'dog' | < Pre-Semitic * <i>k b</i> - ⁴ |
| [cf. Akkadian <i>kalb-um</i> , Arabic <i>kalb-un</i> , Hebrew <i>kēlēb</i> , etc.] | |
| Semitic * <i>ra'</i> š- 'head' | < Pre-Semitic * <i>rHš</i> - |
| [cf. Akkadian <i>rīš-um</i> , Arabic <i>ra's-un</i> , Hebrew <i>ro'()</i> š, etc.] | |

There are difficulties with Diakonoff's analysis, however. The presence of *' among the "sonant" phonemes is unexpected, although, as Diakonoff observes, the so-called "laryngeals" of Proto-Indo-European, as traditionally reconstructed, seem to have been capable of undergoing an analogous syllabification. It is more problematical to find that Diakonoff is led by his theory to remove from the list of primary nouns certain stems which would otherwise run counter to his generalizations concerning permissible stem-configurations. This is presumably why, for example, he is obliged to remove the Semitic stem **kasp*- 'silver' (Akkadian *kasp-um*, Hebrew *kēšep*), which ends in the non-"sonants" *s* and *p*, from the list of basic nouns, and to regard it as a deverbal formation related to Akkadian *kasāp-um* 'chip, break off.' Counterexamples to the patterns which he proposes are not difficult to find, however—cf. the Semitic stems meaning 'soul' (Hebrew *nēpeš*, Arabic *nafs-un*), 'honey' (Akkadian *dišp-u*, Arabic *dibs-un*), 'seven' (Arabic *sab'-un*, Hebrew *šēba'*), and 'nine' (Arabic *tis'-un*, Hebrew *tēša'*), which contain -C₂C₃- sequences which do not contain a sonant, and the stems for 'salt' (Arabic *milh-un*, Hebrew *mēlah*), 'wolf' (Arabic *di'b-un*, Hebrew *zə'eb*), and 'well' (Arabic *bi'r-un*, Hebrew *bə'er*), which contain vowels other than *-a- despite the presence of a "sonant" serving as C₂.⁵

Diakonoff's interpretation proceeds from an internal reconstruction of the reconstructed ancestral Semitic language, and ultimately deals with the nature of the remote ancestral language from which Proto-Semitic developed. The analysis of the sonorants advanced in the present investigation, in contrast, has adopted a comparative approach, in that it has attempted to exploit the various apparent inconsistencies—the data which do not conform to the general phonological rules as they are currently formulated—found across the attested descendant languages of the

⁴ In the case of 'dog,' Diakonoff takes the original **k|b*- to have been bimorphemic, containing a suffix **b*- associated with the names of "animals of prey and harmful animals"—cf. Arabic '*aqrab*- 'scorpion,' '*arnab*- 'rabbit,' '*θa'lab*- 'fox,' and other examples—and concludes that **k|b*- consequently must have originally referred to a wild animal (Diakonoff 1970: fn. 23).

⁵ "... [G]enerally speaking, any nominal base pattern which may be written as C₁VC₂C₃, where C₂ ≠ S and C₃ ≠ S, is suspicious from the point of view of the probability of its primary origin, even if the verbal root in question has not been preserved in the historically attested languages..." (Diakonoff 1970: 475).

Semitic family. The fact that such inconsistencies exist is an indication that the root of these problems in the reconstruction of Semitic is to be located specifically at the Proto-Semitic level, and that the various offshoots of the Semitic ancestral language reacted to this root cause, to one degree or another, independently.

The two theories calling for the reconstruction of syllabic sonorants—that of Diakonoff and that proposed here—are not, of course, mutually incompatible, and in principle it might be argued that the sonorants of the original Afro-Asiatic proto-language could have behaved in the manner argued by Diakonoff (i.e., $*\text{-}\text{ṣ-} > *\text{-}a\text{ṣ-}$), and that only later (i.e., by the time that the Proto-Semitic stage had been reached) did a new set of syllabic sonorants arise which ultimately gave rise to the set of reflexes which we find in the documented Semitic languages (e.g., Proto-Semitic $*l >$ Akkadian *lu*, Arabic *la-*, Hebrew *-aC-*, etc.). The present study is concerned only with the reconstruction of Proto-Semitic and leaves aside the numerous issues surrounding the nature of the distant linguistic forerunners of the ancestral Semitic language. It is to be hoped that advances in the field of the comparative study of the Afro-Asiatic linguistic group will ultimately be able to shed light on the possible relevance of the concepts expressed in the present study to the numerous questions surrounding the developments which eventually led to the appearance of the ancestral Proto-Semitic language.

In order to justify an interpretation of early Semitic along the lines suggested here it is of primary importance to determine to what degree the notion of secondary, contextually motivated syllabification can contribute elsewhere in the analysis of the structure of early Semitic. We have seen that the vowel correspondence found in the negative particle reconstructed here as $*'l$ ($>$ Akkadian *ul*, Hebrew *'al*, Ugaritic *āl*, Gə'əz *'al(-bo)*, Amharic *al ~ aC-*, Jibbali *əl*, etc.) gives us reason to suspect that the same factor which led to the form assumed by the asseverative-precative particle $*l-$ was also at play in the development of this form; the irregular paradigm of Hebrew *lāqah* and its Northwest Semitic cognates, it has been suggested above, has likewise benefited from investigation along these lines. It is entirely likely that other lexical and grammatical situations which can contribute to the discussion of Semitic $*'l$ remain to be identified among the documented languages. As an example we may note the correspondence seen in Akkadian *tulū* and Gə'əz *tallā'*. Both of these have the meaning 'breast,' and the form of the first syllable in each word agrees well with the models which we have cited above (Akkadian *lu*, *ul* vs. Gə'əz *la-*, *'al*), raising the possibility of tracing these forms back to an ancestral $*t(l)\bar{a}'$. Until such time as we have completed the task of elucidating the phonological structure of the Semitic ancestral language, and of chronicling

in detail its subsequent development into the known Semitic languages, we may regard this set of data—and indeed all the data like it which have been the subject matter of the present investigation—as an indication of how much remains to be done.

Table 35: Reflexes of the Semitic particle **l-*
as posited in the present study

| | ASSEVERATIVE | PRECATIVE | DEFINITE ARTICLE |
|---|--|--|--|
| <i>*l-</i> in environment lacking an adjacent vowel | Arabic <i>la-</i> , <i>lam yakun</i> Akkadian <i>lu iprus</i> Gə'əz <i>la-</i> Hebrew <i>haC-</i> ; <i>w-ay-yəhî</i> | Arabic (dialectal) <i>la-yakun</i> Akkadian <i>lu taprus</i> ; <i>i niprus</i> Gə'əz <i>la-yəkun</i> [Heb. <h-tšp(w)ṭ>?] | Arabic <i>al-bayt-</i> Hebrew (<i>h</i>) <i>ab-báyit</i> ; Phoenician (<i>h-</i>), Moabite <i>h-</i> [Aramaic <i>bayt-ā</i> ?] [Mehri <i>ħa-</i> , Jibb. <i>ε-</i> ?] [Amorite <i>la-</i> ?] |
| <i>*l-</i> in environment containing a following vowel ⁶ | | Akkadian <i>l-iprus</i> Aramaic <i>l-ip'al</i> Amorite <la-am-li-ik> Sabaean <l-ħdrnn> Tigre <i>l-əfgär</i> Socotri <i>l-ik'bər</i> [Arabic <i>li-yakun</i> ?] | |
| <i>*l-</i> preceded by a vowel ⁷ | | Arabic <i>wa-l-yakun</i> | Arabic <i>wa-l-bayt-</i> |
| Unclear ⁸ | Ugaritic <l-> | | Tigre <i>lä-</i> |

⁶ Reconstructed for Proto-Semitic when the particle was prefixed to the person-marker **y-*, the latter having become syllabified while the **l-* remained consonantal—**l.*y-ktub-* → **l-i-ktub*. In addition, in Akkadian and (evidently) Southwest Semitic non-syllabic **l-* also arose secondarily through the loss of the first-person singular marker **-* (Assyrian *l-aprus*, Amharic *l-əsbär*, Mehri *l-ərke:z*).

⁷ Only Arabic seems to have preserved forms reflecting a sensitivity to the preceding environment.

⁸ It is unclear whether Ugaritic emphatic/precative *l-* is to be viewed as the reflex of **l-* or of **l-*. Judging by the paradigm of *lqh*, Ugaritic took part in the same development of word-medial **l-* that we see in the other Northwest Semitic languages. It remains to be determined, however, whether the same development of **l-* > **aC-* would have also taken place in word-initial position in pre-Ugaritic.

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